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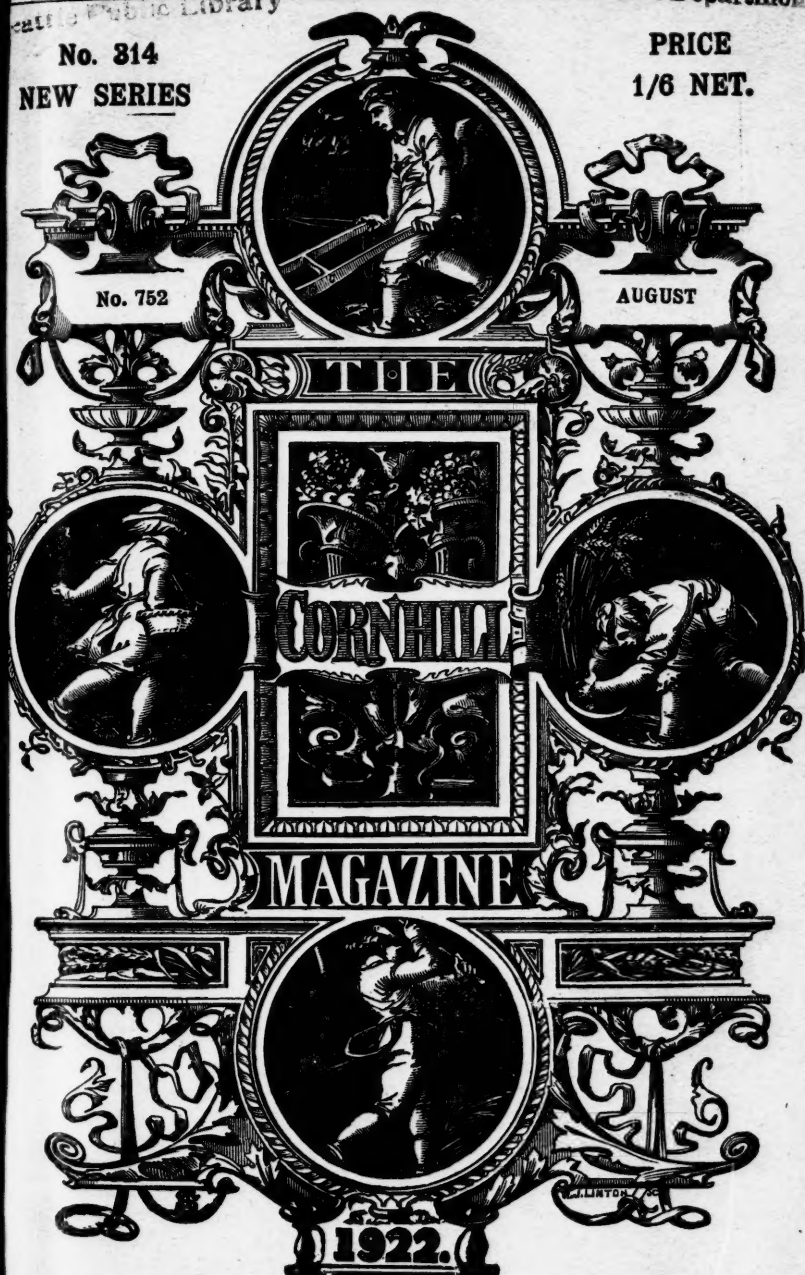
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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
OVINGTON'S BANK. CHAP. XXV—XXVII. By STANLEY J. WEYMAN	129
OPEN PATHS: PICTURES OF WILD LIFE IN ENGLAND—III. By E. L. GRANT WATSON ... ..	159
THE WEDDING: A GYPSY STORY. By JOHN SAMPSON ... ..	167
THE POET IN THE KITCHEN. By L. F. SALZMAN, F.S.A. ... ..	184
WINCHELSEA. By A. C. BENSON ... ..	192
PORR: A COCKNEY TALE. By AMIT AYA ... ..	201
A PEACEFUL NIGHT. By FREDERICK MARTIN ... ..	218
SNAKE-CHARMERS. By E. O. K. ... ..	226
A MOUNTAIN CLIMB UNDER FIRE. By GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG ... ..	230
THE 'FACTS' IN POETRY. By MAURICE HEWLETT ... ..	246

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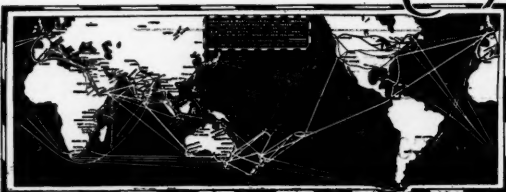
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## Round the World Business Tours

LAMSON

THE  
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

AUGUST 1922.

OVINGTON'S BANK.

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

CHAPTER XXV.

WHILE the leaven of uneasiness, fermenting into fear, and liable at any moment to breed panic, worked in Aldersbury, turning the sallow bilious and the sanguine irritable—while the contents of the mail-bag and the *Gazette* were awaited with growing apprehension, and inklings of the truth, leaking out, were turning to water the hearts of those who depended on the speculators, life at Garth was proceeding after its ordinary fashion. No word of what was impending, or might be impending, travelled so far. No echo of the alarm that assailed the ears of terrified men, forced on a sudden to face unimagined disaster, broke the silence of the drab room where the Squire sat brooding, or of the garden where Josina spent hours pacing the raised walk and looking down on that strip of sward where the water skirted the Thirty Acres wood.

That strip of sward where she had met him, that view from the garden were all that now remained to her of Clement, all that proved to her that the past was not a dream; and they did much to keep hope alive in her breast, and to hold her firm in her resolve. So precious indeed were the associations they recalled, that while, with the hardness of a woman who loves elsewhere, she felt little sympathy with Arthur in his disappointment, she actively resented the fact that he had chosen to address her there, and so had profaned the one spot on which, with some approach to nearness, she could dream of Clement.

Living a life so retired, and with little to distract her, she gave herself to long thoughts of her lover, and lived and lived again the stolen moments which she had spent with him. It was on these that she nourished her courage and strengthened her will; for, bred to submission and educated to obey, it was no small thing that she contemplated. Nor could she have

raised herself to the pitch of determination which she had reached had she not gained elevation from the thought that the matter now rested in her own hands, and that all Clement's trust and all his dependence were on her. She must be true to him or she would fail him indeed. Honour no less than love required her to be firm, let her timid heart beat as it might.

On wet days she sat in the Dutch summer-house, the squat tower with the pyramidal roof and fox-vane on top, which flanked the raised walk, and had, when viewed from below, the look of a bastion. But the day after Ovington's return happened to be fine. It was one of those days of mild sunshine and soft air, which occur in late autumn or early winter and, by reason of their rarity, linger in the memory; and she was walking in the garden when, an hour before noon, Calamy came to tell her that 'the master' was asking for her. 'And very peevish,' he added, shaking his head as he stalked away under the apple-trees, 'as he's like to be, more and more till the end.'

She overtook the man in the hall. 'Is he alone, Calamy?' she asked.

'Ay, but your A'nt's been with him. He's for going up the hill.'

'Up the hill?'

'Ay, he's one that will walk while he can. But the next time, I'm thinking,' shaking his head again, 'it won't be his feet he'll go out on.'

'Mrs. Bourdillon has gone?'

'Ay, miss, she's gone—as we're all going,' despondently, 'sooner or later. She brought some paper, for I heard her reading to him. It would be his will, I expect.'

Josina thought the supposition most unlikely, for if her father was close with his money he was at least as close with his affairs. As long as she could remember he had held himself in a crabbed reserve, he had moved a silent master in a dependent world, even his rare outbursts of anger had rather emphasised than broken his reticence.

And since the attack which had consigned him to darkness he had grown even more taciturn. He had not repelled sympathy; he had rendered it impossible by ignoring the existence of a cause for it. While all about him had feared for his sight and, as hope faded, had dreaded the question which they believed to be trembling on his lips, he had either never hoped, or, drawing his own conclusions, had abandoned hope. At any rate, he had

never asked. Instead he had sat—when Arthur was not there to enliven him or Fewtrell to report to him—wrapped in his own thoughts, too proud to complain or too insensible to feel, and silent. Whatever he thought, whatever he feared, he hid all behind an impenetrable mask; and whether pride or patience or resignation were behind that mask, none knew. Complaint, pity, sympathy, these, he seemed to say, were for the herd. He had ruled; darkness and helplessness had come upon him, but he was still the master.

Arthur might think that he failed, but those who were always about him saw few signs of it. To-day, when Josina entered his room she found him on his feet, one hand resting on the table, the other on his cane. 'Get your hat and cloak,' he said. 'I am going up the hill.'

So far his longest excursion had been to the mill, and Josina thought that she ought to remonstrate. 'Won't it be too far, sir?' she said.

'Do as I say, girl. And tell Calamy to bring my hat and coat.'

She obeyed him, and a minute later they left the house by the yard door. He walked with a firm step, his hand sometimes on her shoulder, sometimes on her arm; but, aware how easily she might forget to warn him of an obstacle, or to allow for his passage, she accompanied him with her heart in her mouth. Yet she owned a certain sweetness in his dependence on her, in the weight of his hand on her shoulder, in his nearness.

Before they left the yard he halted. 'Look in the pig-styes,' he said. 'Tell me if that idle dog has cleaned them?'

She went and looked, and assured him that they were in their usual state. He grunted, and they moved on. Passing beneath the gable end of the summer-house they descended the steep, rutted lane which led to the mill. 'The first day of the year was such a day,' the Squire muttered, and raised his face that the sun might fall upon it.

When they came to the narrow bridge beside the mill, with its roughened causeway eternally shaken by the roar and wet with the spray of the overshot wheel, she trembled. There was no parapet, and the bridge was barely wide enough to permit them to pass abreast. But he showed no fear, he stepped on to it firmly, and on the crown he halted. 'Look what water is in the pound,' he said.

'Had I not better wait—till you are over, sir?'

'Do as I say, girl! Do as I say!' He struck his cane impatiently on the stones.

She left him unwillingly, and more than once looked back, but always to see him standing, gaunt and slightly stooping, his sightless eyes bent on the groaning, labouring wheel, on the silvery cascade that poured over its black flanges, on the fragment of rainbow that glittered where the sun shot the spray with colours. He was seeing it all, as he had seen it a thousand times: in childhood, when he had lingered and wondered before it, fascinated by the rush and awed by the thunder of the falling water; in youth, when with gun or rod he had just glanced at it in passing; in manhood, when it had come to be one of the amenities of the property, and he had measured its condition with an owner's eye; ay, and in later life, when to see it had been rather to call up memories, than to form new impressions. Now, he would never see it again with his eyes, and he knew it. And yet he had never seen it more clearly than he did to-day, as he stood in darkness, with the cold breath of the water-fall on his cheek.

She grasped something of this as she hurried back, and satisfied as to the pound he went on. They ascended the lane which, on the farther side of the brook, led to the highway, and crossing the road began to climb the rough track that wound up through that part of the covert which was above the road.

Here and there a clump of hollies, a spreading yew, a patch of young beech to which the leaves still clung, blocked the view, but for the most part the eye passed unobstructed through trees stripped of foliage, and disclosing here a huge boulder, there a pile of moss-grown stones. A climb of a third of a mile, much of it steep, brought them without mishap—though a hundred times she trembled lest he should trip—to the steep glacis of sward that fringed, and in places ran up into, the limestone face.

It was broken by huge stones, precariously stayed in their descent, or by outcrops of rock from which sprang slender birches, light, graceful, their white bark shining.

'Are we clear of the wood?' he asked, lifting his face to meet the breeze.

'Yes, sir.'

He turned leftwards. 'There's a flat stone with a holly to north of it. D'you see it? I'll sit there.'

She led him to it and he sat down on the stone, his stick between his knees, the sunshine on his face. She sat beside him, and as she looked over the expanse of pleasant vale and the ring of hills that compassed it about, the sense of his blindness moved her almost to tears. At their feet Garth, its red walls, its buildings and yards and policies, lay as on a plan. Beyond, the tower of Garthmyle Church rose in the middle distance, a few thatched roofs peeping through the half-leafless trees about it. Leftwards the valley narrowed as the Welsh hills closed in, while to their right it melted into the smiling plain with its nestling villages, its rows of poplars, its shining streams. She fancied that he had been in the habit of coming to this place, and she thought that he saw no more from it now than when he sat in his room below, that he viewed nothing of the bright landscape spread beneath her own eyes, swelled her breast with pity. She could have cast her arms about him and wept as she strove to comfort him—could have sworn to him that while he lived her eyes should be his! Ay, she could have done this, all this—if he had been other than he was!

Perhaps it was as well—or perhaps it was not as well—that she did not give way to the impulse. For presently in a voice as dry as usual, 'Do you see the gable of Wolley's Mill, girl? Carry your eyes right of the hill, over the coppice at the corner of Archer's Leasow.'

She told him that she could see it.

'That's two miles away. It's the farthest I own in that direction, but there's a slip of Acherley's land between us and it. Now look down the valley—d'you see five poplars in a row?'

'Yes, sir, I see them.'

'That's our boundary towards the town. Behind us we march with the watershed. Facing us—the boundary is the far fence of Whittall's farm at the foot of the hills.'

'The black and white house, sir?'

'Ay. Well, look at it, girl. There's five thousand acres and a bit over; and there's two hundred and ninety people living on it—there's barely one of them I don't know. I've looked after them, but I've not cosseted them, and don't you cosset them. And it's not only the people; there's not a field I don't know nor a bit of coppice that I can't see, nor a slate roof that I have not slated, and the Lord knows how much of it I've drained. It's been ours, the heart of it since Queen Bess,



and part of it since Mary ; sometimes logged with debt, and then again cleared. I came into it logged, and I've cleared it. It's come down, sometimes straight sometimes sideways, but always in a man's hands. Well, it will soon be in a girl's. In two or three years, more or less, it will be yours, my girl. And do you mark what I say to you this day. You're the heir of tail, and I couldn't take it from you, if I would—but do you mark me !' He found her hand and gripped it so hard as to give her pain, but she would not wince. 'Don't you part with an acre of it ! Not with an acre of it ! Not with an acre of it ! Do you hear me, girl ; or I think I'll turn in my grave ! If you are bidden to do it when your son comes of age, you think of me and of this day, and don't put your hand to it ! Hold to the land, hold to the land, and they as come after you shall hold up their heads as we have held ours ! It isn't money, it isn't land bought with money, it's the land that's come down, that will keep Griffins where Griffins have been. When I am gone do you mark that ! Whatever betide, let 'em say what they like, don't you be one of those that sell their birthright, the right to govern, for a mess of pottage !'

'I will remember, sir !' she said with tears. 'I will, I will indeed !'

'Ay, never forget it, don't you forget this day. I ha' brought you up the hill on purpose to show you that. For fifty years I have spared and lived niggardly and put shilling to shilling to clear that land and to drain it and round it—and maybe, for Acherley is a random spendthrift, I'll yet add that strip of his to it ! I've lived for the land ; that those who come after me may govern their corner as Griffins have governed it time out of mind. I've done my duty by the people and the land. Don't you forget to do yours.'

She told him earnestly that she never would—she never would. After that he was silent awhile. He let her hand go. But presently, and without warning, 'Why don't you ha' the lad ?' Josina was surprised and yet not surprised ; or if surprised at all, it was at her own calmness. Her colour ebbed, but she neither trembled nor faltered. She had not even to summon up the thought of Clement. The charge to which she had just listened clothed her with a dignity which the prospect, spread before her eyes and insensibly raising her mind to higher issues, helped to support. 'I couldn't, sir,' she said quietly. 'I do not love him.'



'Couldn't? Don't love him?' the Squire repeated—yet not half so angrily as she expected. 'What's amiss with him?'

'Nothing, sir. But I do not love him.'

'Love? Bah! Love 'll come! Maids ha' naught to do with love! When they're married love 'll come fast enough, I'll warrant! The lad's straight and comely and a proper age—and what else do you want? What else do you want, eh? He's of your own blood, and if he's wild ideas 'tis better than wild oats, and he'll give them up. He's promised me that, or I'd never ha' said yes to him! Why, girl!' with sudden exasperation, ''twas only the other day you were peaking and puling for him! Peaking and puling like a sick sparrow, and I was saying No! And now—why, damme, what do you mean by it?'

'It was all a mistake, sir,' she said. 'I never did think of him, or wish for him. It was a mistake.'

'A mistake! What do you mean?'

'You bade me think no more of him, and I obeyed. But—but I never had any thought of him.'

That did irritate the old man; it seemed to him that she played with him. In a rage he struck his cane on the ground. 'Damme!' he exclaimed. 'That's womanlike all over! Give her what she wants and she doesn't want it. But, see here, I'll not have it, girl. I know your flimsies and you've got to have him! Do you hear?'

He was enraged by this queer twist in her, and he blustered. But his anger—and he felt it—lacked something of force. He did not know how to bring it to bear. And when she did not reply to him at once, 'Do you forget that he saved my life?' he cried, dropping to a lower level. 'D'you forget that, you ungrateful wench?'

'But he did not save mine, sir!' she answered, with astonishing spirit. 'Yet it is mine that you ask me to give him. And indeed, indeed, sir, he does not love me.'

'Then why should he want you?' he retorted. 'Eh? But he'll soon make you sure of that, if you'll let him. And you've got to take him. You've got to take him. Let's ha' no more words about it. I've said the word.'

'But I've not, sir,' she replied, with that new and astonishing courage of hers. 'And I cannot say it. I am grateful to him, I shall ever be grateful to him for saving you—and he is my cousin. But he does not love me, he has never made love to me.'

And am I, your daughter, to—to accept him, the moment it suits him to marry me ? ’

That touched the Squire’s pride. It gave him to think. ‘Never made love to you ? ’ he exclaimed. ‘What do you mean, girl ? ’

‘Until he came to me in the garden on Tuesday he never—he never gave me reason to think that he would come. Am I,’ with a tremor of indignation in her voice, ‘of so little account, is that which you have just told me that I may some day bring to him so little, that I must put all in his hand the moment he chooses to lift it ? ’

The Squire was bothered by that, and ‘You are like all women ! ’ he exclaimed. ‘I don’t know where to ha’ you. That’s where it is. You twist and you turn, and you fib——’

‘I am not fibbing, sir.’

‘And you’ve as many quirks as—as a hunted hare. There’s no holding you ! My father would ha’ locked you up with bread and water till you did what you were told, and my mother ’d ha’ boxed your ears till she put some sense into you. But we’re a d—d silly generation. We’re too soft ! ’

She minded this little, as long as he did not put her to the supreme test ; as long as he did not ask her if there was anyone else, any other lover. But his mind was now busy with Arthur. Was it true that the young spark was thinking more of Garth than of the girl ? More of the heiress than of the sweetheart ? More of lucre than of love ? If so, d—n his impudence ! He deserved what he had got ! From which point it was but a step to thoughts of the bank. Ay, Arthur was certainly one who had his plans for getting on, and getting on in ways to which no Griffin had stooped before. Was this of a piece with them ?

The doubt had a cooling effect upon him. While Josina trembled lest the fateful question should still be put, and clenched her little hands as she summoned up fortitude to meet it—while she tried to still the fluttering of her heart, the old man relapsed into thought, muttered inarticulately, fell silent.

She would have given much to know the direction of his thoughts.

At last, ‘Well, you’re so clever you must settle your own affairs,’ he grumbled. ‘I’m d—d if I understand either of you, girl or man. In my time if a wench said No, we took her and hugged her till she said Yes ! We didn’t go to her father. But

since the old king died there's no red blood in the country—it's all telling and no kissing. There, I've done with it. Maybe when he turns his back on you, you'll be wanting him fast enough.'

'No, sir, never!' she answered, overwhelmed by a victory so complete.

'Anyway, don't come fretting to me if you do! Your aunt told me that you were pining for him, but I'm hanged if she knows more than I do—or happen you don't know your own mind. Now look out, and tell me if they've finished thatching that wagoner's cottage at the Bache?'

'Yes, sir. I can see the new straw from here,' she said.

'Have they brought it down over the eaves?'

'I'm afraid I can't see that. It's too far.'

'Mind me to ask Fewtrell. Now get me home. Where's your arm? I'll go down through the new planting.'

'But it's not so safe, sir,' she remonstrated. 'There's the stone stile, and——'

'When I canna get over the stone stile I'll not come up the hill. I want to see the planting. D'you take me that way and tell me if the rabbits ha' got in. March, girl!'

She obeyed him, but in fear and trembling, for there was not only the awkward stile to climb, but the track ran over outcrops of rock on which even a careful walker might slip. However, he crossed the stile with ease, aided less by her arm than by his own memory of its shape, and of every stone that neighboured it; and it was only over the treacherous surface of the rock that he showed himself really dependent on her care. Memory could not help him here, and here it was, as he leant on her shoulder, that she felt, her breast swelling with pity, the real, the blood tie between them. Her heart went out to him, and her eyes were dim with tears when at length they stood again on the high road, and viewed, on a level with themselves but divided from them by the trough of green meadows in which the brook ran, the gables and twisted chimneys, the buttressed walls, that gave to Garth its air of a fortress.

The girl gazed at it, the old man's hand still on her shoulder. It was her home: she knew no other, she had never been fifty miles from it. It stood for peace, safety, protection. She loved it—never more than now, and never as much as now. And never as much as now had she loved her father; never before

had she understood him so well. The last hour had wrought a change, dimly suspected by both, in their relations. They stood on a level—more on a level, at any rate; with no gulf between them but the natural interval of years, a green valley as it were, which the eyes of understanding and the light foot of love could cross at will.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

A WEEK and a day went by after the banker's return and there was no run upon the bank. But afar off, in London and Manchester and Liverpool, and even in Birmingham, there were shocks and upheavals, failures and talk of failures, fear in high places, ruin in low. For there was no doubt about the crisis now. The wheels of trade, which had for some time been running sluggishly, stopped. It was impossible to sell goods, for the prudent and foreseeing had already flung their products upon the market, and glutted it, and later, others had come in and, forced to find money, had sold down and down, procuring cash at any sacrifice. Now it was impossible to sell at all. Men with the shelves of their warehouses loaded with goods, men whose names in ordinary times were good for thousands, could not find money to meet their trade bills, to pay their wages, to discharge their household accounts.

And it was still less possible to sell shares, for shares, even sound shares, had on a sudden become waste paper. The bubble companies, created during the frenzy of the past two years, were bursting on every side, and the public, unable to discriminate, no longer put faith in anything. Rudely awakened, they opened their eyes to reality. They saw that they had dreamed, and been helped to dream. They discovered that skates and warming pans were in no great request in the Tropics, and could not be exported thither at a profit of five hundred per cent. They saw that churns and milkmaids, freighted to lands where the cattle ran wild on the pampas and oil was preferred to butter, were no certain basis on which to build a fortune. Their visions of South American argosies melted into thin air. The silver from La Plata which they had pictured as entering the mouth of the Thames, or at worst as within sight from the Lizard, was discovered to be reposing in the darkness of unopened seams. The pearling ships were yet to build, the divers to teach, and, for the diamonds

of the Brazils which this man or that man had seen lying in skin packages at the door of the Bank of England, they now twinkled in a cold and distant heaven, as unapproachable as the Seven Stars of Orion. The canals existed on paper, the railways were in the air, the harbours could not be found even on the map.

The shares of companies which had passed from hand to hand at fourfold and tenfold their face value fell with appalling rapidity. They fell and fell until they were in many cases worth no more than the paper on which they were printed. And the bursting of these shams, which had never owned the smallest chance of success, brought about the fall of ventures better founded. The good suffered with the bad. Presently no man would buy a share, no man would look at a share, no bank advance on its security. Men saw their fortunes melt day by day as snow melts under an April sun. They saw themselves stripped, within a few weeks or even days, of wealth, of a competence, in too many cases of their all.

And the ruin was widespread. It reached many a man who had never gambled or speculated. Business runs on the wheels of credit, and those wheels are connected by a million unseen cogs. Let one wheel stop and it is impossible to say where the stoppage will cease, or how many will be affected by it. So it was now. The honest tradesman and the manufacturer, striving to leave a competence to a family nurtured in comfort, were involved in one common ruin with the spendthrift and the speculator. The credit of all was suspect; from all alike the sources of accommodation were cut off. Each in his turn involved his neighbour, and brought him down.

There was a great panic. The centres of commerce and trade were convulsed. The kings of finance feared for themselves and closed their pockets. The Bank of England would help no one. Men who had never sought aid before, men who had held their heads high, waited, vain petitioners, at its doors.

Fortunately for Ovington's, Aldersbury lay at some distance from the centres of disturbance, and for a time, though the storm grumbled and crackled on the horizon, the town remained calm. But it was such a calm as holds the tropic seas in a breathless grip, before the typhoon, breaking from the black canopy overhead, whirls the doomed bark away, as a leaf is swept before our temperate blasts. Throughout those six days, though little happened, anything, it was felt, might happen. The arrival

of every coach was a thing to listen for, the opening of every mail-bag a terror, the presentation of every bill a pang, the payment of every note a thing at which to wince ; while the sense of danger, borne like some infection on the air, spread mysteriously from town to village, and village to hamlet, to penetrate at last wherever one man depended on another for profit or for subsistence. And that was everywhere.

A storm impended, and no man knew where it would break, or on whom it would fall. Each looked in his neighbour's face and, seeing his fear reflected, wondered, and perhaps suspected : If so-and-so failed, would not such-an-one be in trouble ? And if such-an-one 'went,' what of Blank—with whom he himself had business ?

The feeling which prevailed did not in the main go beyond uneasiness and suspicion. But, in quarters where the facts were known and the peril was clearly discerned, these days of waiting were days—nay, every day was a week—of the most poignant anxiety. In banks, where those behind the scenes knew that not only their own stability and their own fortunes were at stake, but that if they failed there would be lamentation in a score of villages and loss in a hundred homes, endurance was strained to the breaking point. To show a cheerful face to customers, to chat over the counter with an easy air, to smile on a visitor who might be bringing in the bowstring, to listen unmoved to the murmur in the street that might presage bad news—these things made demands on nerve and patience which could not be met without distress. And every hour that passed, every post that came in, added to the strain.

Under this burden Ovington's bearing was beyond praise. The work of his life—and he was over-old to begin it again—was in danger, and doubtless he thought of his daughter and his son. But he never faltered. He had, it is true, to support him the sense of responsibility which steels the heart of the born leader, even as it turns to water that of the pretender ; he knew, and doubtless he was strengthened by the knowledge, that all depended on him, on his calmness, his judgment, his resources ; that all looked to him for guidance and encouragement, watched his face, and marked his demeanour.

But even so, he was the admiration of those in the secret. Not even Napoleon, supping amid his marshals, and turning over to sleep beside the watch-fire on the night before a battle, was more

wonderful. His son swore fealty to him a dozen times a day. Rodd, who had received his money in silence, and now stood to lose no more than his place, followed him with worshipping eyes and, perhaps, an easier mind. The clerks, who perforce had gained some inkling of the position, were relieved by his calmness, and spread abroad the confidence they drew from him. Even Arthur, who bore the trial less well, admired his leader, suspected at times that he had some secret hope or some undisclosed resources, and more than once suffered himself to be plucked from depression by his example.

The truth was that while financial ability was common to both, their training had been different. The elder man had been always successful, but he had been forced to strive and struggle; he had climbed but slowly at the start, and there had been more than one epoch in his career when he had stood face to face with defeat. He had won through, but he had never shut his eyes to the possibility of failure, or to the fact that in a business which in those days witnessed every twenty years a disastrous upheaval, no man could count on, though with prudence he might anticipate, a lasting success. He had accepted his profession with its drawbacks as well as its advantages. He had not closed his eyes to its risks. He had viewed it whole.

Arthur, on the other hand, plunging into it with avidity at a time when all smiled and the sky was cloudless, had supposed that if he were once admitted to the bank his fortune was made, and his future secured. He knew indeed, and if challenged he would have owned, that banking was a precarious enterprise; that banks had broken. He knew that many had closed their doors in '16, still more on one black day in '93. He was aware that in the last forty years scores of bankers had failed, that some had taken their own lives, that one at least had suffered the last penalty of the law. But he had taken these things to be exceptions—things which might, indeed, recur, but not within his experience—just as in our day, though railway accidents are not uncommon, no man for that reason refrains from travelling.

At any rate the thought of failure had not entered into Arthur's mind, and mainly for this reason he, who in fair weather had been most confident and whose ability had shone most brightly, now cut an indifferent figure. It was not that his talent or his judgment failed; in these he still threw Clement and Rodd into the shade. But the risk, suddenly disclosed, was too much



for him. It depressed him. He grew crabbed and soured, his temper flashing out on small provocation. He sneered at Rodd, he snubbed the clerks. When it was necessary to refuse a request for credit—and the necessity arose a dozen times a day—his manner lacked the suavity that makes the best of a bad thing.

In very truth they were trying times. Men who had bought shares through Ovington's, and might have sold them at a profit but had not, could not understand why the bank would not now advance money on the security of the shares, would not even pay calls on them, and had only advice, and that unpalatable, at their service. They came to the parlour and argued, pleaded, threatened, stormed. They would close their accounts, they would remove them to Dean's, they would publish the treatment that they had received! Again, there were those who had bought railway shares, which were now at a considerable discount and looked like falling farther; the bank had issued them—they looked to the bank to take them off their hands. More trying still were the applications of those who, suddenly pressed for money, came, pallid and wiping their foreheads with bandanna handkerchiefs, to plead desperately for a small overdraft, for twenty, forty, seventy pounds—just enough to pay the weekly wage bill, or to meet their household outgoings, or to settle with some pressing creditor. For all creditors were now pressing. No man gave time, no man trusted another, and for those in the bank the question was, How long would they trust Ovington's? For every man who left the doors of the bank after a futile visit, every man who went away with his request declined, became a potential enemy, whose complaint or even his chance word might breed suspicion.

'Still, every day is a day gained,' the banker said as he dropped his mask on the Friday afternoon and sank wearily into a chair. It was closing time, and the clerks could be heard moving in the outer room, putting away books, counting the cash, locking the drawers. Another day had passed without special pressure. 'Time is everything.'

Arthur shrugged his shoulders. 'It would be, if it were money.'

'Well, I think that we are doing capitally—capitally so far,' said Clement.

'I am glad you are satisfied,' Arthur retorted. 'We are four hundred down on the day! I can't think, sir'—peevishly—'why you let Purslow have that seventy pounds.'



'Well, he is a very old customer,' the banker replied patiently, 'and he's hard hit—he wanted it for wages, and I fear that he's behindhand with them. And if we withhold all help, my boy, we shall certainly precipitate a run. On Monday those bills of Badger's fall due, and I think will be met. We shall receive eleven hundred from them. On Tuesday another bill for three hundred and fifty matures, and I think is good. If we can go on till Wednesday we shall be a little stronger to meet the crisis than we are to-day. And we can only live from day to day'—wearily. 'If Pole's bank goes'—he glanced doubtfully at the door—'I fear that Williams's will follow. And then——'

'There will be the devil to pay!'

'Well, we must try to pay him!'

'Bravo, sir!' Clement cried. 'That's the way to talk.'

'Yes, it is no use to dwell on the dark side,' his father agreed. 'All the same'—he was silent a while, reviewing the position and making calculations which he had made a hundred times before—'all the same, it would make all the difference if we had that twenty thousand pounds in reserve.'

'By Jove, yes!' Arthur exclaimed. For a moment hope animated his face. 'Can you still think of no way of getting it, sir?'

The banker shook his head. 'I have tried every quarter,' he said, 'and strained every resource. I cannot. I'm afraid we must fight our battle as we are.'

Arthur gazed at the floor. The elder man looked at him and thought again of the Squire. But he would not renew his suggestion. Arthur knew better than he what was possible in that quarter, and if he saw no hope, there doubtless was no hope. At best the idea had been fantastic, in view of the prejudice which the Squire entertained against the bank.

While they pondered, the door opened, and all three looked sharply round, the movement betraying the state of their nerves. But it was only Betty who entered—a little graver and a little older than the Betty of eight or nine months before, but with the same gleam of humour in her eyes. 'What a conclave!' she cried. She looked round on them.

'Yes,' Arthur answered dryly. 'It wants only Rodd to be complete.'

'Just so.' She made a face. 'How much you think of him lately!'

'And unfortunately he's taken his little all and left us.'

The shot told. Her eyes gleamed, and she coloured with anger. 'What do you mean? Dad'—brusquely—'what does he mean?'

'Only that we thought it better,' the banker explained, 'to make Rodd safe by paying him the little he has with us.'

'And he took it—of course?'

The banker smiled. 'Of course he took it,' he said. 'He would have been very foolish if he had not. It was only a deposit, and there was no reason why he should risk it with us—as things are.'

'Oh, I see. Things are as bad as that, are they? Any other rats?'—with a withering look at Arthur.

'I am afraid that there is no one else who can leave,' her father answered. 'The gangway is down now, my dear, and we sink or swim together.'

'Ah! Well, I fancy there's one of the rats in the dining-room now. That is what I came to tell you. He wants to see you, dad.'

'Who is it?'

'Mr. Acherley.'

Ovington shrugged his shoulders. 'Well, it is after hours,' he said, 'but—I'll see him.'

That broke up the meeting. The banker went out to interview his visitor, who had been standing for some minutes at one of the windows of the dining-room, looking out on the slender stream of traffic that passed up and down the pavement or slid round the opposite corner into the Market Place.

Acherley was not of those who go round about when a direct and more brutal approach will serve. Broken fortunes had soured rather than tamed him, and though, when there had been something to be gained by it, he had known how to treat the banker with an easy familiarity, the contempt in which he held men of that class made it more natural to him to bully than to fawn. Before he had turned to the street for amusement he had surveyed the furniture of the room with a morose eye, had damned the upstart's impudence for setting himself up with such things, and consoled himself with the reflection that he would soon see it under the hammer. 'And a d—d good job, too!' he had muttered. 'What the blazes does he want with a kidney wine-table and a plate-chest! It will serve Bourdillon right for lowering himself to such people!'

When the banker came to him he made no apology for the

lateness of his visit, but 'Hallo!' he said bluntly, 'I want a little talk with you. But short's the word. Fact is, I find I've more of those railway shares than it suits me to keep, Ovington, and I want you to take a hundred off my hands. I hear they're fetching two-ten.'

'One-ten,' the banker said. 'They are barely that.'

'Two-ten,' Acherley repeated, as if the other had not spoken. 'That's my price. I suppose the bank will accommodate me by taking them?'

Ovington looked steadily at him. 'Do you mean the shares you pledged with us? If so, I am afraid that in any event we shall have to put them on the market soon. The margin has nearly run off.'

'Oh, hang those!'—lightly. 'You may as well account for them at the same price—two and a half. I'll consider that settled. But I've a hundred more that I don't want to keep, and it's those I am talking about. You'll take them, I suppose—for cash, of course? I'm a little pressed at present, and want the money.'

'I am afraid that I must say No,' Ovington said. 'We are not buying any more, even at thirty shillings. As to those we hold, if you wish us to sell them at once—and I am inclined to think that we ought to—'

'Steady, steady! Not so fast!' Acherley let the mask fall, and, drawing himself to his full height—and tall and lean, in his long riding coat shaped to the figure, he looked imposing and insolent enough—he tapped his teeth with the handle of his riding whip. 'Not so fast, man! Think it over!'—with an ugly smile. 'I've been of use to you. It is your turn to be of use to me. I want to be rid of these shares.'

'Naturally. But we don't wish to take them, Mr. Acherley.'

Acherley glowered at him. 'You mean,' he said, 'that the bank can't afford to take them? If that's your meaning—'

'It does not suit us to take them.'

'But, by G—d, you've got to take them! D'you hear, sir? You've got to take them, or take the consequences! I went into this to oblige you.'

'Not at all,' Ovington said. 'You came into it with your eyes open, and with a view to the improvement of your property, if the enterprise proved a success. No man came into it with eyes more open! To be frank with you—'

But Acherley cut him short. 'Oh, d—n all that!' he cried. 'I did not come here to palaver. The long and short of it is you've got to take the shares, or, by Gad, I go out of this room and I say what I think! And you'll take the consequences. There's talk enough in the town already, as you know. It only needs another punch, one more good punch, and you're out of the ring and in the sponging house. And your beautiful bank you know where. You know that as well as I do, my good man. And if you want a friend instead of an enemy you'll oblige me, and no words about it. That's flat!'

The room was growing dark. Ovington stood facing such light as there was. He looked very pale. 'Yes, that's quite flat,' he said.

'Very good. Then what do you say to it?'

'What I said before—No! No, Mr. Acherley!'

'What? Do you mean it? Why, if you are such a fool as not to know your own interests——'

'I do know them—very well,' Ovington said resolutely, taking him up. 'I know what you want and I know what you offer. It is, as you say, quite flat, and I'll be equally—flat! Your support is not worth the price. And I warn you, Mr. Acherley, and I beg you to take notice, that if you say a word against the solvency of the bank after this—after this threat—you will be held accountable to the law. And more than that, I can assure you of another thing. If, as you believe, there is going to be trouble, it is you and such as you who will be the first to suffer. Your creditors——'

'The devil take them! And you!' the gentleman cried, stung to fury. 'Why, you swollen little frog!' losing all control over himself, 'you don't think my support worth buying, don't you? You don't think it's worth a dirty hundred or two of your scrapings! Then I tell you I'll put my foot on you—by G—d, I will! Yes! I'll tread you down into the mud you sprang from! If you were a gentleman I'd shoot you on the Flash at eight o'clock to-morrow, and eat my breakfast afterwards! You to talk to me! You, you little spawn from the gutter! I've a good mind to thrash you within an inch of your life; but there'll be those ready enough to do that for me by and by—ay, and plenty, by God!'

He towered over the banker, and he looked threatening enough, but Ovington did not flinch. He went to the door and threw it open. 'There's the door, Mr. Acherley!' he said.

For a moment the gentleman hesitated. But the banker's firm front prevailed, and with a gesture, half menacing, half contemptuous, Acherley stalked out. 'The worse for you!' he said. 'You'll be sorry for this! By George, you will be sorry for this next week!'

'Good evening,' said the banker—he was trembling with passion. 'I warn you to be careful what you say, or the law will deal with you.' And he stood his ground until the other, shrugging his shoulders and flinging behind him a last curse, had passed through the door. Then he closed the door and went back to the fireplace. He sat down.

The matter was no surprise to him. He knew his man, and neither the demand nor the threat was unexpected. But he knew, too, that Acherley was shrewd, and that the demand and the threat were ominous signs. They brought before him, more forcibly than anything that had yet occurred, the desperate nature of the crisis, and the likelihood that, before a week went by, the worst would happen. He would be compelled to put up the shutters. The bank would stop. And with the bank would go all that he had won by a life of continuous labour: the position that he had built up, the status that he had gained, the reputation that he had achieved, the fortune which he had won and which had so much exceeded his early hopes. The things with which he had surrounded himself, they too, tokens of his success, the outward and handsome signs of his rise in life, the acquisition of some of which had been landmarks, milestones on the path of triumph—they too would go. He looked sadly on them. He saw them, he too, under the hammer: saw the mocking, heedless crowd handling them, dividing them, jeering at his short-lived splendour, gibing at his folly in surrounding himself with them.

Ay, and one here and there would have cause to say more bitter things. For some—not many, he hoped, but some—would be losers with him. Some homes would be broken up, some old men beggared: and all would be laid at his door. His name would be a byword. There would be little said of the sufferers' imprudence or folly or rashness: he would be the scapegoat for all, he and the bank he had founded. Ovington's Bank! They would tell the story of it through years to come—would smile at its rise, deride its fall, make of it a town tale, the tale of a man's arrogance, and of the speedy Nemesis which had punished it!

He was a proud man, and the thought of these things, the

visions that they called up, tortured him. At times he had borne himself a little too highly, had presumed on his success, had said a word too much. Well, all that would be repaid to him now with interest, ay, with compound interest.

The room was growing dark, as dark as his thoughts. The fire glowed, a mere handful of red embers, in the grate. Now and again men went by the windows, talking—talking, it might be, of him: anxious, suspicious, greedy, ready at a word to ruin themselves and him, to cut their own throats in their selfish panic. They had only to use common sense, to control themselves, and no man would lose a penny. But they would have no common sense. They would rush in and destroy all, their own and his. For no bank called upon to pay in a day all that it owed could do so, any more than an insurance office could at any moment pay all its lives. But they would not blame themselves. They would blame him—and his!

He groaned as he thought of his children. Clement, indeed, might and must fend for himself. And he would—he had proved it of late days by his courage and cheerfulness—and the father's heart warmed to him. But Betty? Gay, fearless, laughing Betty, the light of his home, the joy of his life! Who, born when fortune had already begun to smile on him, had never known poverty or care or mean shifts! For whom he had been ambitious, whom he had thought to see well married—married into the county, it might be! Poor Betty! There would be an end of that now. Past his prime and discredited, he could not hope to make more than a pittance, happy if he could earn some two or three pounds a week in some such situation as Rodd's. And she must sink with him and accept such a home as he could support, in place of this spacious old town-house, with its oaken wainscots and its wide, shallow stairs, and its cheerful garden at the back.

His love suffered equally with his pride.

He was thinking so deeply that he did not hear the door open, or a light foot cross the room. He did not suspect that he was not alone until a pair of warm young arms slid round his neck, and Betty's curls brushed his cheek. 'In the dumps, father?' she said. 'And in the dark—and alone? Poor father! Is it as bad as that? But you have not given up hope? We are not ruined yet?'

'God forbid!' he said, hardly able, on finding her so close to him, to control his voice. 'But we may be, Betty.'

'And what then?' She clasped him more closely to her. 'Might not worse things happen to us? Might you not die and I be left alone? Or might I not die, and you lose me? Or Clement? You are pleased with Clement, father, aren't you? He may not be as clever as—as some people. But you know he's there when you want him. Suppose you lost us?'

'True, child. But you don't know what poverty is—after wealth, Betty—how narrowing, how irksome, how it galls at every point! You don't know what it is to live on two or three pounds a week, in two or three rooms!'

'They will bring us the closer together,' said Betty.

'And to be looked down upon by those who have been your equals, and shunned by those who have been your friends!'

'Nice friends! We shall do better without them!'

'And things will be said of me, things it will be hard to listen to!'

'They won't say them to me,' said Betty. 'Or look out for my nails, ma'am! Besides, they won't be true, and who cares, father? Lizzie Clough said yesterday I'd a cast in one eye, but does it worry me? Not a scrap. And we'll shut the door on our two or three rooms and let them—go hang! As long as we are together we can face anything, father—we can live on two pounds or two shillings or two pence. And consider! You might never have known what Clement was, how lively, how brave, how'—with a funny little laugh—'like me,' hugging him to her, 'if this had not happened—that's not going to happen after all.'

He sighed. He dealt with figures, she with fancy. 'I hope not,' he said. 'At any rate I've two good children, and if it does come to the worst—'

'We'll lock ourselves in and our false friends out!' she said; and for a moment after that she was silent. Then, 'Tell me, father, why did Mr. Rodd take that money—when you need all that you can get together, and he knows it? For he's taking the plate to Birmingham to pledge, isn't he? So he must know it.'

'He is, if——'

'If it comes to the worst? I know. Then why did he take his money, when he knew how things stood?'

'Why did he take his own when we offered it?' the banker replied. 'Why shouldn't he, child? It was his own, and business



is business. He would have been very foolish if he had not taken it. He's not a man who can afford to lose it.'

'Oh!' said Betty. And for some minutes she said no more. Then she roused herself, poked the fire, and rang for the lamp.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

'WELL,' said the Squire peevishly, 'I can do no more. Girls ha' their whimsies, and it's much if you can hinder 'em running after Mr. Wrong without forcing 'em to take Mr. Right. At any rate I've said what I could for you, lad, and the end was as if I hadn't. You must fight your own battle. Jos hasn't'—this would never have occurred to the Squire in his seeing days—'too gay a life of it, and if you're not man enough to get on the soft side of her, with a clear field, why, damme, you don't deserve to have her.'

'I was well enough with her,' Arthur said resentfully, 'till lately. But she is changed, sir.'

'Well, like enough. Girls are like that.'

'There may be—some one else.'

The Squire snorted. 'Who?' he said. 'Who?'—more roughly. 'You're talking nonsense.'

Arthur could not say who. He could not name anyone. So far as he knew there could not be anyone. But his temper, chafed by a week of suspense and anxiety, was not smoothed by the old man's refusal to do more. And then to fail with Josina! To be rejected by Josina, the simple girl whom, in his heart, he had regarded as a *pis aller*, on whom he had deigned to confer a half-contemptuous affection, on whose youthful fancy he had played for his pastime! This was enough to try him, apart from the fact that things in Aldersbury looked black, and that, losing her, he lost the consolation prize to which he had looked forward to make all good. So, taken to task by the Squire, he did not at once assent. 'Who?' he repeated gloomily. 'Ah, I don't know.'

'Nor I!' the Squire retorted. 'There is nobody. Truth is, my lad, the man who has been robbed sees a face in every bush. However, there 'tis; I've said my say, and I've done with it. Did you bring those deeds from Welsh's?'

Arthur swallowed his mortification as best he might—fortu-



nately the old man could not see his face. 'Yes,' he said. 'I left them downstairs.' The Squire had caught a cold, sitting out on the hill on the Saturday, and had been for some days in his bedroom.

'Well, I'm going to pay wages now,' he rejoined. 'Bring 'em up after dinner and I'll sign 'em. You and the girl or Peacock can witness them. And hark you—here, wait a minute'—irascibly, for Arthur, giving as much rein to his temper as he dared, had turned on his heel and was marching off. 'Take my keys and open the safe-cupboard downstairs, and bring me up the agreement. I've got to compare it with the lease—I shan't sign it without! Lock the door, d'you hear, before you open the cupboard, and have a care no one sees you.'

'Very well,' Arthur said, and was half-way to the door when again, as if to try his patience, the old man stopped him. 'What's this they're saying about Ovington's, eh? 'Bout the bank? Pretty thing, if he's let you in and your money too! But I'm not surprised. I told you you were a fool, young man, to dirty your hands in that bag, whatever you thought to get out of it. And if you're not going to get anything out of it, but to leave your own in, as I hear talk of—what then? Come, let's hear what you have to say about it! I'd like to know.'

'I don't know what you've heard, sir,' Arthur answered, sparing for time. For self-control, provoking as the old man was, he had no longer need to fight. For he had seen, the moment the Squire spoke, that here, here if he chose to avail himself of it, was his chance of the twelve thousand! Here was an opening, if he had the courage to seize it. Granted the chance was desperate, and the opening unpromising—a poorer or less promising could hardly be. And the courage necessary was great. But here it was. The Squire himself had brought up the subject. He knew of the rumours: he had broken the ice. Here it was, and for a moment, uncertain, wavering, giddy with the swift interchange of *pros* and *cons*, Arthur tried for time—time to think. 'What was it? What did you hear, sir?' he asked.

'What did I hear?' the Squire answered. 'Why, that they're d—d suspicious of them in the town. And I don't wonder. Up in a night, and cut off in a day, like a rotten mushroom!' He spoke with gusto, forgetting for the moment what this might mean to his listener; who, on his side, hardly heeded the brutality, so absorbed was he in the question which he must answer—the question whether it would be wise or foolish, ruin or salvation,

to ask the Squire for help. 'He'll be another Fauntleroy, 'fore he's done,' the old man went on with relish. 'He'll stretch a rope, you'll see if he won't! I told him as much myself. I told him as much in those very words the day he came here about his confounded silly toy of a railroad. He might take in Woosenham and a lot of other fools, I told him, but he did not deceive me. Now I hear that he's going to burst up, and where'll you be, my lad? Where'll you be? By Gad, you may be in the dock with him!'

Certainly he might speak on that. The old man was harsh and hard-fisted, but he was also hard-headed and very shrewd; and conceivably the case might be so put to him that he might see his profit in it. Certainly it might be so put that he might see a fair prospect of saving his nephew's five thousand at no great risk to himself. The books might be laid before him, the figures be taken out, the precise situation made clear. There was—it could not be put higher than this—just a slender chance that he would listen, prejudiced as he was.

But twelve thousand! It was such a stupendous sum to name. It needed such audacity to ask for it. And yet it was that or nothing. Less might not serve; while to ask for less, to ask for anything at all, might cost the petitioner the favour he had won—his standing in the house, and the advantages which the Squire's support might still gain for him. And then it was such a forlorn hope, such a desperate, feckless venture! No, he would be a fool to risk it. He dared not do it. He had not the face.

Yet, for a few seconds after the Squire had ceased to speak, Arthur hesitated, confession trembling on his lips. The twelve thousand would make all good, save all, redeem all—ay, and bind Ovington to him in bonds of steel. But no, he dared not. He would be a fool to speak. And instead of the words that had risen to his lips, 'I think you mistake, sir,' he said coldly. 'I think you'll find that this is all cry and little wool! Of course money is tight, and there is trouble in the City. I've heard talk of two or three weak banks being in difficulties, and I should not wonder if one or two of them stopped payment between this and Christmas. We are told that it is likely. But we are perfectly solvent. It will take more than talk to bring Ovington's down.'

'Umph!' the Squire grumbled. 'Well, maybe, maybe. You talk as if you knew, and you ought to know. I hope you do know. After all—I don't want you to lose your money—Gad, a pretty

fool you'd look, my lad! A pretty fool, indeed! But as for Ovington, a confounded rascal, who thinks himself a gentleman because he has filled his purse at some poor devil's expense—I'd see him break with pleasure.'

'I don't think you'll have the pleasure this time!' Arthur retorted with a bitterness which he could not repress—a bitterness caused as much by his own doubts as by the other's harshness. He left the room without more, the keys in his hand, and went downstairs.

It wanted about an hour of the Squire's dinner-time, but Calamy had laid the table early, and the dining-room was dark. Arthur carried in a lamp from the hall, and himself closed the shutters. He locked the door. Then he opened the nearer panel and the cupboard behind it, and sought for and found the agreement—but all mechanically, his mind still running on the Squire's words, and now approving of the course he had taken, now doubting if he had not missed his opportunity. The agreement in his hand, his errand done, he closed the cupboard door, and was preparing to close the panel, when, with his hand still on it, he paused. More clearly than when his bodily eyes had rested upon them he saw the contents of the cupboard.

And one thing in particular, a small thing, but it was on this that his mind focused itself—the iron box containing the India Stock. He saw it before him; it stood out dark, its every outline sharp. And with equal clearness he saw its contents, the two certificates that remained in it. He recalled the value of them, and almost against his will he calculated their worth at the price of the day. India Stock, sound and safe security as it was, had fallen more than thirty points since the Squire had sold. It stood to-day, he thought, at two hundred and forty or a little over or a little under—somewhere about that. At the lowest figure five thousand pounds would fetch—just twelve thousand, he calculated.

Twelve thousand!

He stood staring at the door, and even by the yellow light of the lamp his face looked pale. Twelve thousand! And upstairs in a pigeon-hole of the old bureau, where he had carelessly thrust it when it was no longer needed, was the blank transfer.

It seemed providential. It seemed as if the stock—stock to the precise amount he required—had been placed there for a purpose. Twelve thousand! And realisable, no matter what the pinch. If he borrowed it for a month, what harm would there be? Or

what risk? The bank was solvent, he knew that: give it time, and it would stand as strong as ever. Within a month, or two months at the most, he could replace the stock, and no one would be the wiser. And the bank and his own fortune would be saved.

Whereas—whereas, if the bank failed, he lost everything. And what was it his uncle had said? 'A pretty fool you will look!' It was true, it was horribly true. He would be the laughing stock of the county. Men of his own class would say with a sneer that it served him right. And the Squire—what would he say? His life would be a hell!

Still he hesitated, though he told himself that it was not by boggling at trifles that men arrived at great ends—nor by poltroonery. And who would be the loser? No one. It would be all gain. The Squire, if he had common sense, would be the first to wish it done.

Yet, as he felt through the bunch, with fingers that shook a little, for the small key that opened the box, he glanced fearfully over his shoulder. But the door of the room was locked, the windows were shuttered: no one could see him. No one could ever say what he had done in that room. And he was lawfully there, at the Squire's own request, on his errand.

Five minutes later he closed the door, closed the panel. He took up the lamp with a steady hand and left the room. He went into the Squire's bedroom to return the keys, loitered a minute or two at the bureau, then he went to his own room. On the table lay the lease and the counterpart that he had brought from Aldersbury for the old man's signature. He closed and locked the door.

It was some hour and a half later that, having finished dinner—and he had talked more fluently at the meal, and with less restraint than of late—he rose from the table with Miss Peacock and Josina. 'I'll come with you,' he said. 'I shall have my wine upstairs.' And then, turning to Miss Peacock, 'The Squire will want you to witness his signature,' he said. 'Will you come? He has to sign some deeds that Welsh's have sent.'

Miss Peacock bewailed herself. She was in a flurry already at the prospect. 'Oh, dear, dear,' she said, 'I wish he didn't! I am all of a twitter, and then he scolds me. I am sure to put my name in the wrong place, or write his or something.'

Josina laughed. 'What will you give me to go instead?' she asked. 'Come! But, there, I'll go. In fact, he told me before dinner that I was to go.' She moved towards the door.

But Arthur did not move. He looked disturbed. 'I don't think that that will do,' he said slowly. 'Considering what it is—I think the Peahen would be the better.'

'But if she doesn't like it?' Jos objected. 'And I must go, Arthur, for he told me to go. So the sooner the better. We have sat longer than usual, and, though Calamy is with him, he won't like to be kept waiting.'

Arthur seemed to consider it. 'Oh, very well,' he said at last. He followed her from the room.

The Squire was sitting before the fire, at the small round table at which he had eaten his meal. A decanter of port and a couple of glasses stood at his elbow. Two candles in tall silver candlesticks shed a circle of light on the table, and showed up his white head and his hands, but failed to illumine the larger part of the room. The great bed with its drab hangings, the lofty press with its brass handles, the dark Windsor chairs, now lurked in and now sprang from the shadows, as the fire flickered up or sank. On the verge of the circle of light the butler moved mysteriously, now appearing, now disappearing; now coming forward to set an inkstand and goose-quills beside the decanter, now withdrawing to pile unseen plates upon an unseen tray.

The Squire was tapping impatiently on the table when they entered. 'Well, you're in no hurry for your wine to-night,' he said. 'Have you brought the papers? You might have a'most written them in the time you've been.'

'Sorry, sir,' said Arthur. 'They are here. Will you sit here, Jos?'

'Nay, nay, she must be near by,' the old man objected. His hearing was still good. 'Close up! Close up, girl! I want her eyes. And do you fill your glass. Now, have you all ready? Then do you read me the agreement first, that I may see if the lease tallies. And read slowly, lad, slowly. Calamy!'

'I am here, sir,' lugubriously. 'Where we'll be to-morrow——'

'D—n you, don't whine, man, but snuff the candles. And then get out. Do you hear?'

Calamy mumbled that it would be all the same at the latter end. He went out with his tray, and closed the door behind him.

'Now!' said the Squire, and obediently to the word Arthur began to read. Once or twice his voice failed him, and he had to clear his throat. Josina would have thought that he was nervous, had she ever known him nervous. Fortunately, the document was short, as legal documents go, and some five

minutes, during which the Squire sat listening intently, saw it at an end.

'Umph! Sounds all right,' he commented. 'Sight o' words! But there, they've got to charge. Now do you give the girl the counterpart, and do you read the lease, lad, and read it slowly, so as I may understand. And hark you, Jos, speak up if there is any differ—nail it like a rat, girl, and don't go to sleep over it! Don't you let me be cheated. Welsh is as honest, and I'd as lief trust him, as another, but if aught's amiss it's not he that will suffer, nor the confounded scamp of a clerk that made the mistake. And see you there's no erasures: I'm lawyer enough to know that. Now, slow, lad, slow,' he commanded, 'so that I can take it in.'

Arthur complied, and began to read slowly and carefully. But again he had more than once to stop, his voice failing. He explained it by saying that the light was not good, and he rose to snuff the candles. The lease, too, was longer than the agreement, and was full of verbiage, and it took some time to read, and some patience. But at long last the delivery clause was reached. No discrepancy or erasure had been discovered, and the Squire, whose attention had never faltered—he was an excellent man of affairs—declared himself satisfied.

'Well, there,' he said, in a tone of relief, 'that's done! Drink up, lad, and wet your throttle.' He turned himself squarely to the table. 'Give me the pen I used last,' he continued. 'And do you guide my hand to the right place.'

'I am afraid your pen was left to dry,' Arthur said, 'and the nib has opened. You'll have to use a new one, sir, and try it first. And—the sand? We shall want that. I am afraid it is downstairs. If Josina would not mind running down for it?'

'Pooh! pooh! Never mind the sand! Let 'em dry o' themselves. Less chance of blotting. Where's the pen?'—holding out his hand for it.

'Here, sir. Will you try it on this? If you'll write your name in full, as if you were signing the deeds'—he guided the Squire's hand to the place—'I shall see if it is right—and straight.'

'Ay, ay, best be careful,' the Squire agreed, squaring himself to his task. 'Twon't do to spoil 'em. Here?'

'Yes—just as you are now.'

The old man bent over the table, his white hair shining in the centre of the little circle of light cast by the candles. Slowly and laboriously, in a tense silence, while Arthur, leaning over his

shoulder, followed each movement of the pen, and Josina, half in light, half in shadow, watched them both from the farther side of the table, he wrote his name.

It was a perfect signature, though rather bolder and larger than usual, and 'Excellent!' Arthur cried in a tone of relief, which betrayed the anxiety he had felt. 'Good! It could not be better! Well done, sir!' He removed the paper as he spoke, but in the act looked sharply across at Josina. The girl's eyes were upon him, but her face was in shadow, and he could not read its expression. He hesitated a moment, the paper in his hand, then he laid it on the table beside him—and out of her reach.

'Right!' said the Squire. 'Then, now for business. Let's have the lease. My hand's in now.'

Arthur laid it before him, and guided his hand to the place. 'Is there ink enough in the pen?' the old man asked.

'Quite enough, sir. It won't do to blot it.'

'Right, lad, right!' The Squire wrote his name. 'Now the counterpart!' he continued briskly, holding the quill suspended.

Arthur put it before him. He signed it, steadily and clearly. 'All right?' he asked.

'Quite right. Couldn't be better, sir.'

'Then, thank God that's done!' He sank back in his chair, and raised his hand to take off his glasses, then remembered himself. 'Pheugh!' he said, 'it's a job when you can't see.' But it was plain that he was pleased with himself.

Arthur turned to Josina. 'Your turn next!' he said; and he gave her the pen. He put the lease before her, and pointed to the place where she was to sign.

She was not as nervous as Miss Peacock, but she was anxious to make no mistake. 'Here?' she asked.

'Yes, there. Be careful.' Arthur snuffed the candles, and as he did so he glanced over his shoulder, his eyes searching the shadows. Then he leant over her, watching her pen.

She wrote her name, slowly and carefully. 'Good!' he said, and he removed the document. He set another before her, and silently showed her with his finger where to write. She wrote her name.

'Now here,' he said. 'Here! But wait! Is there enough ink in the pen?'

She dipped the pen in the inkpot to make sure, and shook it, that there might be no danger of a blot. Again she wrote her name.



'Capital!' he said. His voice betrayed relief. 'That's done, and well done! Couldn't be better. Now it's my turn.'

'But'—Jos looked up in doubt, the pen still in her hand—'but I've signed three, Arthur! I thought there were but two.'

'Three!' exclaimed the Squire, turning his head, his attention caught. 'Damme!'—peevishly—'what mess has the girl made now?' It was part of his creed that in matters of business no woman was to be trusted to do the smallest thing as it should be done.

But Arthur only laughed. 'No mess, sir,' he said. 'Only a goose of herself! She has witnessed your trial signature as well as the others. That's all. I thought I could make her do it, and she did it as solemnly as you like!' He laughed a little loudly. 'I shall keep that, Jos.'

The Squire, pleased with himself, and glad that the business was over, was in a good humour, and he joined in the laugh. 'It will teach you not to be too free with your signature, my girl,' he said. 'When you come some day to have a cheque book, you'll find that that won't do! Won't do, at all! Well, thank God, that's done.'

Arthur, who was stooping over the table, adding his own name, completed his task. He stood up. 'Yes, sir, that's done. Done!' he repeated in an odd, rising tone. 'And now—the lease goes back to Welsh's. Shall I lock up the counterpart—downstairs, sir?'

'No, lad,' the Squire announced. 'I'll do that myself o' Monday.'

'But it's no trouble, sir.' He held out his hand for the keys. 'And perhaps the sooner it's locked up—the tenant's signed it, and it is complete now—the safer.'

But, 'No, no, time enough!' the Squire persisted. 'I'll put it back on Monday. I am not so helpless now I can't manage that, and I shall be downstairs o' Monday.'

For a moment Arthur hesitated. He looked as if something troubled him. But in the end, 'Very good, sir. Then that's all?' he said.

'Ay; put the counterpart in the old bureau there. 'Twill be safe there till Monday. How's the wine? Fill my glass and fill your own, lad. You can go, Jos. Tell Calamy to come to me at half-past nine.'

*(To be continued.)*



## OPEN PATHS.

PICTURES OF WILD LIFE IN ENGLAND.

BY E. L. GRANT WATSON.

## III.

*July 24. Tenderden.*—Upon a bank covered by rust-coloured seed-plumes of dock and wood-sorrel grow knapweeds interwoven with bramble. These are of the few plants which have weathered the long drought, keeping their leaves fresh. At a little distance a daisy crouches close to the earth with profusion of white and yellow crowns. The purple flowers of the knapweed stand tall and erect facing the sun. They are smaller this year than is usual, but offer from those neat, compact tufts a profusion of honey to bees and butterflies. Meadow-browns, ringlets, blues and coppers jostle for places. They sit side by side or facing each other, three or four on a flower-head. There are large bumble-bees and small black ones with yellow bands about the abdomen; these, together with wasps and beetles, press close to the purple, standing head-downwards amongst the tube-shaped florets.

A single poplar stands not far distant. Its foliage, unlike others of its kind, has not yet been touched by the yellow of autumn. The leaves are cool and green, filled with sap pumped upwards by roots which stretch far beneath the dry crust of soil, and find their way into dark, moist places. A breeze sets the leaves swaying and swinging each on its long stalk. An intimate life within the tree is gendered by the soft air. There is a sound as of rain amongst the leaves. . . . And now as the breeze drops, the tree seems whispering gently to itself of that false promise. In the distance the woodlands are blue under a haze of thick air. Heat shimmers in the valley.

*August 12. Penare, Cornwall.*—From the high ground on the upper cliff the promontory has the appearance of a somewhat attenuated tortoise attached by its head to the mainland. The hind legs are trailing irregularly out to sea, and the tail is an exposed spine of seaweed-clad rocks. The back is domed like a tortoise's shell, and is covered with pale, close-growing grass, with here and there patches

and streaks of yet paler thrift. Gulls congregate on the rocks and scatter in two's and three's over the grass. There are usually some half hundred or so, which fly up as one descends the steep pathway. They wheel overhead uttering their harsh cries, but after a little time they settle upon the outer rocks, watchful and resenting the intruder. All the commoner gulls are here, the smallest being the lightly-built black-headed gull, and the largest, but an occasional visitor, the greater black-backed, whose broad sweep of wings and powerful flight remind me of the albatross. He moves with the same indolent grandeur as does that amazingly swift flier of the south, which untiringly, night and day, follows the liners with almost motionless wings. Guillemot and cormorant also congregate on the outermost rocks, and I have seen gannets with their long, oar-shaped wings, their stabbing beaks and fierce eyes, but these not often.

The autumn moult, I think, must surely have begun, for over the close-grown grass are scattered innumerable feathers. Some few of these are unstained white, and some slaty grey or black from the full-grown birds, but the majority are from the immature yearlings, and are mottled brown and white. The markings are noteworthy. It is as if upon these feathers the sea, in all its moods, was photographed; its very essence is here reproduced and made manifest. On the smooth under vane there are the ribbed markings of sand lately washed by waves. With amazing artistry the tiny picture conjures to the imagination limitless shores, water-washed or wind-etched, bordering continents. Near to the shaft upon the upper vane is the streaked calm of evening reflected in the sea's wind-ruffled mirror. As I turn the feather in my hand, I see new pictures: here is a sky, tempest-inspired, and waves in high tumult; within less than a square inch the storm rages. At a little distance there is the swirl of waters in a race, and here again ribs of sand fresh washed by ripples of the retreating tide.

I shall keep these feathers that they may remind me of the sea. Every disposition of restless water is here depicted. And indeed these pictures have been painted by the very sea itself. They are the imprints of its nature, for since the nestling gull first hatched from the egg upon its ledge of rock, it has been in the presence of sky and water. Its first flight takes it into the air, in which with easy motion it becomes a part; it alights on the sea, and buoyantly floats on its wild cradle. Water and sky have left inevitably and perfectly their mark. These discarded feathers,

which for a little drift over the land, bear, each of them, pictures of their life-history; they carry the imprint of the careless moods of the ever-appealing, ever-hungry waves.

*August 20. Penare.*—Here on the bleak coast of Cornwall, because of the greatness of the sea and the fierce ruggedness of the land, I have been sky-gazing, and it has struck me that it is not often that men look deliberately into the sky. The action demands a certain effort; the turning-up of the eye-balls is in itself more difficult than lowering them to the earth. The blaze of light from so wide a field is blinding to a visual power accustomed, as a rule, to register rays reflected from dark objects. In our everyday pursuits we are aware of the sky's presence, but we do not often regard it, except perhaps at sunset when our eyes may be caught by lines of colour and deep-tinted cloud. When we do look upward and allow our attention to be fixed, we are quickly transported. The blue depths lead us away into the infinity of space. If for a while we prolong that gaze, we learn that in attempting to measure that unmeasurable height we approach the limit of sensuous perception; the world falls away underfoot, above and on all sides stretches the profound unknown. At the same time we are refreshed and made glad, for in the empty sky we meet the free happiness of our deeper aspirations.

This morning I beheld the pure, cloudless dawn before sunrise. The stars were no longer visible. The changing colours merged into one another. Everything had become liquid, the static world seemed but a transparent dream; it had become but a filamentous mist floating in the back-wash of thought. My gaze dipped deeper and deeper into the coldness of that reality, which is colder than ice, and would congeal like ice if it could pause in its perpetual flux. Together with all thought, and with even the impulse of life itself, it would congeal and become crystalline. . . . But then, high up, two gulls drifted across the speckless air. They slanted on steady wings down to the sea. Alive again, but shaken somewhat in assurance, the world appeared. At mid-day white clouds passed over a blue, intense with sunlight. In sharp outline or in vaporous mist they led my thoughts gently across the background of infinity. The evening sky was very hushed and calm, more tender than the dawn, almost familiar, seeming to take into its depth some significance of the earth.

There is a lizard, if I remember aright, that lives, or at one time lived, in New Zealand which has a third eye in the top of its

head. As to whether this eye is functional or not, scientists, I believe, differ. But suppose that it does function, suppose that the rudimentary pineal gland in a man's head were a fully developed third eye opening upwards and staring into the heavens. Would not his nature be fundamentally changed? Would it be possible for him to be occupied with commerce, with machinery or industrial expansion, when the infinity of space was extended always before that skyward-directed eye-ball? Perhaps under the ordeal of this ever-present heavenly vision he would be unable to cope successfully with the needs of his existence. By gazing perpetually upward he might become unfitted for life on earth, given too wholly to day-dreams and visionary speculation to find his daily food. Or, perhaps, drawing new powers from the limitless gulfs of space, he would transmute his material nature and, like the legendary chameleons, feed on air.

*September 17. Penare.*—Time is a small thing in the presence of the sea or the sky. The waves which lap against the steep promontories of this Cornish coast, and which flow undulating over submerged rocks, swaying the dark seaweed, are the same in mystical identity as the waters I have known, ten years ago, at the mouth of the Parramatta, or at the Antipodes. They are akin to the great rollers of the Indian Ocean, and of the same intent as the leeward water lapping the bird-haunted crags of the Abrolhos. The Pacific is of the same character, and in the night-time the coral pools of Viti Levu reflect the moonlight in the same manner as do the gurgling, lipping waves which caress so gently these archæan rocks.

The vast circle of the night sky, like the sea which it encloses, is eternally the same. Constellations may vary, but the human moods engendered by the consciousness of that over-arching vault are constant. The time and place may be far different, years may have passed and continents have been left behind. The tremulous wisp of being, which is a man's life, may seem entirely other from what it was, yet will the darkened heavens carry him into that incomprehensible infinity of space wherein he is lost, his very identity withered to nothingness.

It is pleasant to look back and watch the liquid moonlight on the waves, and to remember scenes in distant countries, to smell the delicate scents of the sea and of the land, and to listen to the waves splashing against the rocks. . . . And now one may well look up again, glance at the moon and at the stars without being

uncomfortably diminished, and feel that in some way the night sky is akin and familiar to the soul. It is familiar, more familiar, I believe, than any scene on earth. Of what strange and intimate significance is the moon! Like the sun, it has been worshipped. A true God, it has the significance of an eternal spectator; it is aloof, too distant to be comprehended, yet how familiar, intimate throughout the ages. Every time I have seen a young moon I have welcomed it; the delicate golden sickle gives an added beauty to the earth. I have been awed by the full moon, a little troubled sometimes by the cold, white light flooding the world, and when the moon is waning night by night, I have felt faint animistic sympathies.

In foreign lands I have followed her course, night after night, always aware of her phases. I have watched her from the solitudes of the Australian bush, climbing her steep path amongst the southern stars, and I have known that in a few hours she would be looking down upon English meadows and copses, that her silver would be reflected from English lakes, and I have pictured the shadows in the hearts of the elm-trees, amid the silver foliage. I have sent messages to the moon that they might be delivered faithfully in England. I have stood sometimes on the shores of the Pacific, and have felt the soft wind which stirred the surface into ripples of satin water. I have been aware of my utter insignificance, aware of the night sky overhead and the dead grey sands underfoot; and I have watched the moon tracing her arc, throwing reflections on the water and shadows on the land, and I have sent messages, knowing that in twelve hours she would be looking down upon the roofs and gardens of people that I knew.

To-night I have looked into the night sky, losing myself in its depth, and the distant places of the world have seemed very present to me; but most wonderful, most beautiful of all has been this Cornish landscape bathed in the cool light. Curlews have passed overhead, calling their sharp whistling note; owls have hooted from the woods which cover the steep combs and skirt the mud-flats by the estuary, and, now and again, a fish has jumped and fallen back with a splash into the water; the waves have been gurgling and slapping and sucking at the foot of the rock, and the wind from the sea has come in warm gusts, and passed with faint sighings inland amongst the woods. I have looked at the moon, and remembered that for thousands of years she has been worshipped. Before to-morrow night she will have looked down upon Africa

and its containing oceans. The orb of the world will have rested under that melancholy, dispassionate gaze. I have remembered those nights spent under southern skies, and have sent yet one more message to a friend not yet forgotten.

*October 12. Tenterden.*—For the last few evenings I have watched the sun set over the marshland. The dykes are dry, and where in spring-time a multitude of insects found life and substance in the clear water there are sun-hardened walls of mud with a scant growth of weeds at the base. Only in the larger dykes, where the salt water has been let in from the sea, is there a shimmer of the reflected sky. Thin-looking sheep wander restlessly over the brown fields. As the sun sinks toward the horizon, their outline is defined by golden light, caught gleaming in their wool. The fields, too, are golden, but of a darker tint, for the bronze heads of the grasses catch and reflect the sun.

A small hill rises in undulating waves above the surrounding flats. It is here that I like to lie, watching the changing colours as the light diminishes. To the westward, and to my right, are grass-covered slopes, blindingly bright in the level rays. Away in front there are fields whose soft-coloured surfaces are cut by dykes, which run athwart them in dark, parallel lines. Beyond, in the distance, the island of Stone-cum-Ebony, with the village of Stone clustered about its church, amongst the enfolding shadow of trees. Eastward, the wide marsh, purple and dark. Behind me there is the warm hill-side.

Birds are preparing for the night, each species in its own characteristic manner. In a saddle of the undulating ground close at my feet there is a large flock of linnets. With little chirpings they move amongst the grass. From time to time they fly up in a mass to scatter fan-like and fall back flutteringly to earth. The sunlight shines through their wings, which appear like angular flames, leaping out and vanishing. In their wavering motion as they flutter and fall they remind me of fire-flies. Again and again they rise with shrill twitterings, which diminish as they are again lost amongst the grass. High up overhead flocks of rooks pass westward towards the sunset. Their black bodies are sharp against the sky: they move in wide crescent formation at open intervals; one squadron follows another intermittently, all going in the same direction. Near to the ground, keeping very close to the earth, flocks of plover come from the southward. They are making a north-easterly course, and disappear behind the bluff of the hill.

The sun sets, leaving behind him bars of red and black on the horizon, and overhead minute clouds, mauve and wine-coloured like the feathers on the breast of a wood-pigeon. As the light fades, the white cattle in the marshes gleam strangely; they seem larger than their wont, very pale, standing ghost-like apart from their fellows. . . . And now, too, the cattle have begun to move. Like the homing flocks of birds, they turn their heads all in one direction and proceed silently, leisurely southward. Some steers pass me at a short distance. They breathe deeply, alarmed at my presence. The sharp horns and heavy heads are dark against the sky. Later I see them again crossing the flats; their colour is almost merged with the dark background of the fields.

On all sides partridges are calling: a sharp, harsh sound, well suited to the brown grasses and open land. The fading twilight tempts me to lie back and look upward into the sky. No colour is left from the sunset, and no stars are yet to be seen; the last rooks have passed, hurrying after their fellows.

My thoughts wander amidst the grey tranquillity of the sky, and I marvel at how much each one of us might possess, yet how little we have to call our own. All the treasures of true living are ours if we do but pause to take them. The beauty of the night is here for everyone. We are heirs to far more than are the birds and the beasts which move in rhythmic obedience to the sun. They are unconscious, blessed in their lack of perception, harmonious because of their simplicity and their limitation. Man only is dowered with objective vision; the swift intake of his senses feeds his genius. His function is twofold, and, for that reason, his obedience is incomplete. At one moment he is of the created pattern, yet at the next can step aside and create it anew. The riches and the power of all his gods are his also—all the variegated beauty of earth, all colour, all sounds, the depth and wonder of the night sky. The distant radiance of the stars which are now shining is his, their vaguely imagined splendour.

Yet how poor is each one of us, how seldom aware of his heritage. We are occupied with serious trifles, and are falsely concerned with what we imagine to be our peculiar perquisite. Anxious about our 'property,' we miss the wealth which only can be gathered when it lies open to all mankind. With how little do we habitually ease our discontent?

*October 14. Tenterden.*—Into the stillness of a chestnut coppice there comes, with a sudden sweep of wings and a great chattering, a



flock of tits. There are two species mixed in about even numbers, great tits and long-tailed tits, between twenty and thirty birds in all. Where but a minute ago there was silence there is now shrill conversation among the twigs and dying leaves. These are an inquisitive people; they flutter around me in short flights from one perch to another. Like all birds of their kind, they seem to balance best in the reverse position; they cling to the under sides of branches, running swiftly along them with jerky movement. Their eyes watch me brightly, but seeing that I remain motionless they are not alarmed.

In company with the rest there is a single golden-crested wren. This is but the second specimen I have seen since the cruel winter of 1916, when so many of these tiny birds died of the cold. I esteem it as a rarity, and am glad to see that some few at least remain alive.

On a quick impulse the flock of tits has moved farther into the wood, but the wren remains behind. He seems curious at my presence, and at a few yards' distance hops from twig to twig. Opening his little beak very wide, he gives a peculiar and definite twite. It is a faint but sharp note, having nothing in common with the harsh cries of the tits. With quick turnings of the head he eyes me from time to time as he swings on a loosened branch, and I can see clearly the gold feathers of his top-knot. The wood is silent now that the others have departed: there is only the one plaintive and oft-repeated note. It is pleasant of him to stay and keep me company, like some peculiar fancy which lingers in the memory after the flock of other thoughts which came along with it have flown. Slowly and bit by bit he moves farther off, and after a while I lose him, together with that faint note, amidst the brown of the tree-stems.

*(To be continued.)*



### THE WEDDING.

ONE pleasant evening in late September Mr. Piggott was returning to his flat, threading his way as usual through a network of back lanes and quiet alleys, which enabled him to concentrate his thoughts more easily than in the crowded thoroughfare behind which they lay. Though comparatively a young man—he was but a year or two over thirty—Stephen Piggott was a scholar of considerable distinction, and held the post of lecturer in Comparative Philology in the provincial University of Lowchester. At this moment he was looking forward with some satisfaction to putting the finishing touches to a piece of research upon which he had been engaged for several months. The monograph, which he proposed to contribute to the Journal of the Oriental Society, dealt with some abstruse questions of sound-change in the Eastern group of Aryan languages, and incidentally established a new series of phonetic equations, which, if unlikely to become as famous as the Laws of Grimm and Verner, might still stamp the discovery with his own name.

A light gale had sprung up, fluttering the clothes on the lines in the backyards of cottages, and hurling fallen leaves and scraps of paper hither and thither. One large sheet made a vicious onslaught on Piggott, and twice he dodged it successfully, nimbly skipping out of its way. Again it blew in front of him, and this time, returning swiftly, plastered itself against his chest. The paper Piggott perceived was the last edition of the *Evening Gazette* of that day, September 27. It was perfectly clean, and before crumpling it up to throw away he glanced at the latest news displayed in capitals in the blank space reserved for the Stop Press. What he read caused him to utter an exclamation of surprise.

Now, to understand the cause of Mr. Piggott's astonishment, it should be explained that his favourite hobby had been the study of the gypsies, a pursuit for which his Oriental learning admirably equipped him. And the words which he read were not only Romani, but 'deep Romani,' the ancient and inflected form of the tongue, now spoken only by a very few English gypsy families.

The actual words were

REPER O

DIVESS

AVAVA TUKI,

meaning, 'Remember the day : I come for thee.'

It was obviously intended as a message to someone who understood this secret language. But why on earth did it appear in the *Stop Press* and not in the *Agony Column* !

He folded the paper neatly in his usual precise fashion and placed it in the pocket of his overcoat, resolving to make enquiries from Smythe, the sub-editor of the *Gazette*, a member of his own chess club, when next they met.

Reaching his flat, Mr. Piggott hung up his hat and coat, and passed into the inner room. He felt anything but well ; perhaps the severe mental application he had given to his work, and the sedentary life he had led for so long might account for the malaise which he now experienced. His limbs trembled ; a clamminess chilled his forehead ; and his feet felt as though they were weighted with lead. Overcome by faintness he dropped into a chair. But worse than these physical symptoms was the feeling of apprehension, the more terrifying because so vague and undefined, accompanied by a sense of impending evil that now began to obsess his mind. What had brought him to this pass ? Mentally he recapitulated the doings of the day, but could think of no disturbing cause, unless—could it possibly have been the gypsy words in the paper which he had picked up in the lane ? How did they run ? His clouded wits failed to recall them precisely. But he felt that it was imperative to read them once more, and weakly and wretchedly he dragged himself in the direction of his coat, gaining support as he went by a hand laid against the wall. A picture, one of himself in the robes of the University of Halle, fell clattering to the floor and jarred his nerves cruelly.

At last—it seemed an eternity—he reached the coat and stood unsteadily before it for some moments, staring at the projecting news-sheet with troubled eyes. To take out the paper and read it now seemed beyond his power. More than once, with the jerky motion of a marionette, he stretched his hand towards it, but dared go no further. An instinct warned him that should he persist in the attempt something in his brain would inevitably snap.

He must pull himself together ; for obviously he was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Still, no doubt some simple drug might set him right. Snatching clumsily at his hat, he stumbled

from the room, and walking like a sick man reached a chemist's shop, which stood a street or two away. As he crawled along he detected himself repeating 'Oh dear! Oh dear! Oh dear!' in a monotonous undertone.

The chemist, a benevolent-looking old gentleman, rapidly took in the situation, and conveyed the impression that customers suffering from Mr. Piggott's or some similar disorder were no uncommon experience in that establishment. He blandly motioned the invalid to a chair. 'Pray take a seat, sir; I perceive you are a little out of sorts: you will feel better in a moment, after taking this draught, our own mixture, approved by the Faculty.' Mr. Piggott gulped it down, and presently felt himself entirely restored. Thanking the venerable pharmacist, he walked homewards with a brisk step, smiling to himself at his late fears. As he entered his rooms he retrieved the newspaper, this time without the least difficulty.

After finishing a modest repast and the single glass of claret which was all he permitted himself, Mr. Piggott sank into an easy chair, lit his pipe, and allowed his mind to revert to the incidents of the day, especially to the mysterious Romani words. Why put off consulting Smythe until they happened to meet at the chess club, of which neither of them was a regular frequenter? Better surely write to him at once, enclosing the passage and asking for an explanation. He dashed off his letter and, snipping out the Stop Press column, was about to place it in the envelope, when glancing at it once more he gave a little laugh of amusement. Here were the words he had mistaken for Gypsy; though not a very exquisite specimen of typography, they read plainly enough

RAPAREE

DIVES

AVALANCHE.

Clearly they were the names of the first three horses in some 'big event,' and the newspaper had been cast away by a disappointed backer.

'Raparee,' jeered Piggott, who in earlier days had numbered a few devotees of the Turf among his friends, 'possibly by Freebooter out of Green Isle; Dives, by Profiteer out of La Guerre; Avalanche'—but he pursued no further these equine pedigrees from an imaginary stud-book. 'Well! it is a fortunate thing I looked again at the paper before sending it to Smythe: he would never have let me hear the last of it. Odd that my eyes should have played me such a trick.'

Whatever may have been the virtues of the famous tonic they were certainly not very enduring. Mr. Piggott retired early to bed, but his short and uneasy slumber was disturbed by an evil dream, a species of nightmare which had more than once recurred on occasions when he was run down. He was in a strange place, not unlike one of those seaside resorts where he had sometimes spent a holiday, and he had lost his way. For the street in which he thought he lodged did not seem to contain his house or anything resembling it, and his attempts to find it by devious foot-paths led him time after time to the same perilous cliffs, among which he clambered giddily, now up and now down, but never able to regain level ground.

Piggott awoke unrefreshed about two o'clock and could sleep no more. He tossed about feverishly for some time, and began to fear that he was in for a bout of illness. His temperature he thought must be high, for he knew that it had affected his power of thinking coherently, and his mind had partially passed out of his control. Awake, and yet not awake, in a dream and yet not in a dream, he beheld himself as a dual personality—one self-terrified and impotent, watching the other who tossed on the bed in torment.

Through the brain of this second self re-echoed the Romani words which he had read or imagined he had read, now uttered in a shrill scream, now in a menacing whisper, or again more distracting still in the sweet tones of a young girlish voice which seemed familiar to him, though he could not identify the speaker. With ceaseless iteration the words poured on. Strive as he might he could not stifle them or dismiss them from his mind.

At length the torture grew unbearable. He leapt out of bed, switched on the light, and paced restlessly up and down the room, repeating to himself his dismal chant of 'Oh dear!' as though the very powers of evil that assailed him might be moved to compassion for his pitiable state. Perhaps it was so; for presently he grew calmer, and ventured to return to bed, though he did not dare to extinguish the light. The words had ceased their clamour, but still occupied his mind; and since he could not escape from them he found it a relief to speculate as to their origin, and to wonder why even in illness they were able to exercise this uncanny power over him. More than once he seemed to be on the point of grasping the clue, but time after time it eluded him. Then suddenly he remembered a thing—a very unpleasant thing—which might account for his present horror.

It was an incident which had occurred nearly seven years ago.

Mr. Piggott could remember the very date, September 30, and it was one which he had never been able to recall without intense repugnance. In early days the thought of it had haunted him with uncomfortable frequency, but for the last few years it had rarely revisited his memory.

Among the English gypsies from whom as a youth Piggott had gathered his first knowledge of Romani lore and language was a family of Herons, who had particularly appealed to him as the pundits of their race and the conservators of the most ancient customs. This clan, and especially this branch of it, were regarded by the Gypsy fraternity as the aristocrats of the road, and it was evident that however different their code and manners from those of well-bred Gentiles, they had inherited a culture of their own, which Piggott could not but regard with deep respect. The family consisted of five members: the father, Archelaus Heron, a striking figure who might have stood for the portrait of Borrow's Gypsy Will; his wife, Vashti, also of Heron blood, and their only child, Eldorai; Vashti's sister, Morjiana; and the man's aged mother, whose prænomen Piggott had never been able to discover. He imagined that in accordance with gypsy usage it might have been abandoned because of the death of some member of the family who had borne the same name. With this little band Piggott soon became on the most intimate terms, and especially was this the case with the young girl; though, as her parents confided to him, she had never before been known to make friends with one of the Gajé or Gentiles, for whom she entertained a deep-rooted antipathy.

Eldorai Heron was then a girl of about fifteen, lithe and graceful, with a face of extraordinary beauty, of that unearthly type which led the gypsy missionary, Samuel Roberts, to remark 'that in the countenances of those who are young and handsome among that people, whether male or female, there is a look of somewhat rather approaching to super-human.' Like many gypsy children who have been made the pets of their grandmothers, Eldorai was somewhat grave and old-fashioned for her years, though her quaint views of things and people were more in accordance with the world of folk-tales than of real life. In the company of her parents and aunt, or alone in her little red-blanketed tent—for it was her whim to have a *tan* of her own—Eldorai would listen with delight to the stories Piggott told her of foreign gypsies and foreign lands. Her pretty ignorance of everything that lay outside the purview of the camp amused and charmed

him. At some of his tales of sights and experiences, which to Piggott himself seemed commonplace enough, she would laugh aloud incredulously, as if applauding his powers of invention. And her laugh was a pleasant thing to hear: like her voice, it had the sound of babbling water. She in her turn would tell the *tarno Rai* of many things beyond his ken—old and strange histories handed down by tradition and fairy tales unknown to Grimm, which Piggott, a keen folk-lorist, would note down when he reached home; for his courteous instincts forbade him to make use of a pencil or notebook in the tents.

He had more than once wondered why he had been singled out for this girl's affection, until one day, in relating some mythical story of a gypsy chief named Panuel, she had observed: 'He was one of the Ingrams, you know, like you, Rai.'

'What!' exclaimed Piggott, 'am I one of the Ingrams, then?'

'*Avali*, Rai. I know'd you was an Ingram the first moment you set foot into my daddie's tent.'

Now the Ingrams, of whom Piggott had occasionally heard from other Romani-chals, were a gypsy family of legendary fame. That at one time there had been such a clan Piggott knew from old church registers, which he sometimes explored for entries relating to 'Wandering Egyptians.' But that this clan, or any survivors of it, still existed seemed to him improbable. However that might be, this family, supposed several generations ago in some unexplained way to have become possessed of great wealth and to have abandoned the wandering life, were said still to preserve more rigidly than ever the old gypsy customs and the language as spoken in former days. Now and then at fair or race-meeting there would be rumours of a magnificent stranger, who would greet some humbler gypsy in Romani almost too deep for him to follow, and when pressed would acknowledge that he was one of this lost tribe.

'So that is what was in Eldorai's mind,' thought Piggott. And, indeed, there were some grounds for her belief, for Piggott had the pale olive complexion and the jet-black hair of the high-caste Romané. 'But my name is not Ingram,' objected he.

'The Ingrams, as you know, Rai, pass under many names,' was the sole answer of this strange child.

And then one day the Thing happened. Archelaus, his wife, and sister-in-law had gone to attend a distant fair—the man to buy and sell horses, the women to tell fortunes. The girl and her grandmother were the only Romané left on the field. Piggott

was sitting in the girl's tent pointing pinthorns with his knife, while he entertained her with a lively account of the gypsies of the Alhambra. Eldorai, a charming barbaric figure, with coral necklet and half-guinea pieces braided in her hair, crouched by the fire, her slim bare legs tucked under her. Lazily and happily he watched her kneading a little flour into dough, the simple constituent of the *Romani marikli* or gypsy-cake. Suddenly the young girl said in a voice that thrilled him: 'Stephen'—it was the first time she had called him by his name—'I want some of your blood.' 'Splendidly dramatic,' thought Piggott, 'this is, no doubt, the prelude to a new version of the Robber Bridegroom, or, better still, perhaps to a vampire myth picked up five centuries ago, when her ancestors sojourned in the Balkans. However, a young and pretty vampire must be treated with the respect due to a lady.' Laughingly, he extended his arm, saying 'Take it, little witch.' And then Eldorai, with her eyes fixed upon his, had rolled up his sleeve. And before he had time to realise what was happening, he felt himself stabbed in the fore-arm by some pointed instrument, doubtless one of the pinthorns of his own fashioning. The blood flowed. In a moment she had stanchd it with the dough. He saw that it made a small scarlet blot on the paste. Then, though more deliberately, she had bared her shapely brown arm, and repeated this strange rite on her own person. Absorbed as an anthropologist observing for the first time some savage ceremony, Piggott watched her re-knead the dough in which their blood was now mingled, fashion it into a thin flat cake, and place it on the red ashes.

His collector's instincts aroused, he waited breathlessly for the next act in this mystery. In a few minutes the *marikli* was baked. Breaking it into two pieces, Eldorai took one herself and handed the other to Piggott, gazing intently into his eyes.

And Piggott, following her example, had eaten it. That was the incredible part of it. How he, delicate-minded and fastidious as he was, could ever have done so he was afterwards at a loss to comprehend. He could only come to the conclusion that he had been hypnotised by the girl, just as spectators are by the Indian juggler in his famous rope trick. But at the time he had felt neither discomfort nor disgust; instead, a strange happiness had pervaded his whole being. It was not until the next morning, when he recalled the occurrence with a shudder, that he felt as though he had taken part in the celebration of some sacrilegious Black Mass.



Piggott remembered the words that Eldorai had spoken to him with such extraordinary gravity: 'And now, Stephen, you belongs to me and I belongs to you: and I will come for you, my *rom*, to the day, no matter wheresoever I be, even if I has to wait until the seven years is out.' Had the spell then efficacy only for a septennium? Piggott had wondered; but he had asked no questions.

Surely these long-forgotten words must be the key to the agitation with which he had misread the Stop Press in the newspaper. But whatever regrets Piggott may have felt at the part he had taken in this sinister sacrament, he had at least been delivered from any dread of the consequences it might entail. The compact could never be carried out. For only two or three days afterwards the gypsy girl had met with a sudden and terrible fate. At the further extremity of the field where the gypsies encamped, separated from it by a low fringe of salallows, was a deep delf or disused quarry, one wall of which descended precipitously into a stagnant pool. In summer the place was very beautiful. Its red stone festooned with sweet-briar and heather, and tapestried with patches of fern and lichen, shone in the sunlight like some rare Italian marble. In winter its aspect was terrible and forbidding. This quarry was a prohibited but favourite playground of the urchins of the neighbourhood, whose joy it was to descend by some new and treacherous path to the pool at the foot of the cliff. There, the morning after her disappearance, they came upon the body of poor Eldorai. It was supposed that she had missed her footing while gathering ferns, the hawking of which Vashti and Morjiana made a pretext for fortune-telling. Her father and mother, arriving too late for the funeral, at once broke up camp, silently packed their belongings, and driving furiously, departed none knew whither.

Such were Piggott's unhappy memories. Morning was now breaking and he knew that any hope of sleep was out of the question. A cold bath somewhat invigorated him, and dressing hastily he escaped from the scene of his misery. With no fixed plan or destination, he set forth on a long tramp, and presently found himself in a park-like stretch of country, where by a succession of stiles and footpaths he reached an acclivity from which he could look down upon the city left behind him. And in the sweet morning air his burden, like Christian's, seemed to fall from his shoulders. Puffing at his briar, he retraced his steps and proceeded homewards

by a different route, his mind reverting to the subject of his monograph.

A mile or two from home a hearty voice hailed him, and looking round he saw the burly form of Farmer Tompkinson, who, shears in hand, was trimming his hedge.

'Marning to ye, Mr. Piggott, marning to ye, sir,' said Tompkinson. 'Ye're out early, but I think I know what fetched ye.' Piggott had known Tompkinson for several years as the owner of the field in which the Herons and other gypsy families were allowed to camp. Indeed, the farmer was a good friend to the gypsies, and was fond of chatting to them round the camp fire, while they in turn often repaid his kindness by shrewd advice about horse-flesh.

'What fetched me, Mr. Tompkinson,' repeated Piggott. 'Nothing more than the wish to stretch my legs. Why do you say that, may I inquire?'

'Well, sir,' said Tompkinson, 'I made sure as how you'd come up to see your old friends. They come and pitched here last night without so much as a "By your leave"; not but what they're welcome,' he added, good-naturedly.

'My old friends!' said Piggott. 'Which, pray?'

'The Herons, for sure,' said Tompkinson. 'There they be, sir.' And leading Piggott through the yard, he pointed out vans and tents at the extremity of a long uncultivated strip of land. Blue smoke was ascending in the clear morning air, and beside the fire Piggott could discern moving figures, though whose, his short sight did not enable him to make out.

'Amazing they should return to this place of all places,' thought Piggott. 'This is altogether outside my experience.'

'And now, sir, I suppose ye'll be hurrying off to have a word with them,' said the farmer, about to resume his work.

'Well, another time, perhaps,' said Piggott nervously; 'not just now, I fancy. It might . . . Better wait a little until they have settled down.' For he had a vivid recollection of a past occasion when, after an absence abroad, he had returned to the tent of his old friends the Grays. More than a year had elapsed since Anselo Gray's death, yet on the Rai's unexpected reappearance the widow and her daughter had prostrated themselves before him, striking their heads against the ground and moaning in an outburst of reawakened sorrow. After some minutes Piggott, greatly perturbed, had stolen silently away. It had been a painful experience, and he dared not in his present mood risk a repetition of it with the Herons.

He was about to wish the farmer a friendly good morning when, peering through his glasses at the encampment, something attracted his attention.

'Are there two tents there or three, Mr. Tompkinson?' he asked in a troubled voice. 'That small object by the hedge is not a third tent, is it?'

'Why, yes, sir, it be,' replied the farmer, looking a little puzzled; 'the young gal's tent, as it seems to me.'

'But surely,' said Piggott in great excitement, 'surely that is impossible. You cannot have forgotten, Tompkinson, what happened to that unfortunate child. That they should have preserved her tent is incredible. Why, it is part of their religion to burn all the property of the dead—everything that can be burnt; and they even go further. Everything else, her little looking-glass, her trinkets, the cups and plates she used, must be broken into atoms and thrown into the water.'

'That's as may be, sir,' said Tompkinson. 'It ain't for me to argify with a gentleman like you, who ought to know, if anyone does. But it looks like her bit of red tent, all the same. And that old lurcher prowling round and round it, why, it might be the one she had last time they was here—not much more than a puppy he was then.'

'But, man!' cried Piggott, 'you are not trying to maintain that the girl is still alive?'

'Well,' said the farmer, scratching his head, 'I wouldn't like to say for sartin. Who was it 'dentified the body of the poor gal? No one but the old grandmother, and she was more than half-blind, and whole-crazy with grief. And there's more than one lass disappeared from these parts. And there was some of the jury, sir, as told me as they didn't think it was the gypsy gal at all. But there, they didn't want naterally to contradict her own folks. However, Mr. Piggott, sir, we'll soon know, and if you was to come up in a day or two I mought be able to tell you a bit more.' Piggott thanked him and promised to do so.

As he walked homewards he wondered whether there could be any ground for Tompkinson's doubts. And at once a hundred circumstances seemed to confirm them. There was the reappearance on the field, the undestroyed tent, the rumours which had reached him of Eldorai—he could now mention her name without qualms—having been seen in different parts of the country. And if she were alive, what then? Could it be possible that this child

—child? no, she must be a woman by now—still attached any validity to the strange pact in which he had been unwittingly involved? To link his life with that of a gypsy, once a boyish day-dream, now seemed unthinkable. His colleagues and friends would rightly esteem him a madman. How could he pursue his life-work? How could he have access to his library? No! in spite of affectionate thoughts of Eldorai, that charming child, the idea was absurd. But then, supposing that once again as once before she looked into his eyes and compelled him to do as she wished? Confound it all! he must dismiss the whole thing from his mind. Besides, Tompkinson was an ass. The girl was dead.

That night, for the first time in his life, Piggott had resort to an opiate which brought him sleep indeed, but not rest. Once more he was the victim of his old nightmare. Again in futile effort to reach his goal he stumbled dizzily in a labyrinth of menacing cliffs, now scrambling painfully across some rocky obstacle, now lowering himself to some foothold even more dangerous than before, until at last he found himself stranded on a narrow ledge from which advance or retreat was equally impossible. Below him stretched the High Street, where gay holiday-makers strolled up and down. He tried to call attention to his plight, but his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, and only a hoarse whisper issued from his lips. He waved his arms. A group far below him watched his antics with amusement, and pointed him out to their friends. Now the shaly rock began to crumble beneath his feet. He was falling, falling—and he awoke with a terrified cry.

How he delivered his lectures on the following morning he hardly knew. Something in the looks of his class convinced him that he must have made many strange blunders. He thought he had said Brughoff and Ostmann for Brugmann and Osthoff, and treated Armenian as one of the Semitic group. But the day came to an end at last, and that evening saw Piggott hastening once more to the farm. In spite of his painful anxiety he had the satisfaction of knowing that his doubts and fears, magnified by this time to absurd importance, would speedily be resolved. There would now at least be some actual situation to grapple with, and Piggott, who was not wanting in decision, welcomed the prospect of exchanging this horrible dubiety for any real issue, however difficult. One he felt he could deal with, the other was like fighting a ghostly enemy armed with immaterial weapons in the dark.

His first glance at Farmer Tompkinson's face reassured him, for

his bucolic friend wore a jovial grin, and his small eyes twinkled with inward merriment.

'Well, Mr. Piggott, sir, I've heard something as may interest ye.'

'About—about Miss Heron?' stammered Piggott.

'Yes, sir; Eldy, as they calls her. That gal is as 'live as you and me are.'

'Then you've seen her?' asked Piggott eagerly.

'Well, not ezactly seen her,' said Tompkinson, 'but I heerd her last night, larfin' to herself in her little tent. You knows the sort of melojous larf she has, sir; couldn't be mistaken in it. But she has been seen, too, sir, by one of the farm-lads.'

'I must make a point of renewing our acquaintance very soon,' said Piggott punctiliously.

The farmer's grin grew broader as he watched Piggott's face with sly curiosity. 'Aye, indeed, so ye should, Mr. Piggott; but ye'll have to be main sharp about it, for the gal's going to be married to-morrow.'

'Married!' exclaimed the astonished Piggott, 'married! Might I ask how you came to learn this, Mr. Tompkinson?'

The farmer burst into a hearty fit of laughter from which it took him some time to recover, as though his pent-up feelings required a capacious outlet. 'Well, sir, this is the way of it. I heerd it from the wife, and, believe me, she ain't one to be mistook in such matters. She'd gone into the Bon Marsh to buy some fal-lals, when who should she see at one of the counters, unbeknownst to them, but Eldy's mother and aunt buying all the best finery in the shop. "If it's for a wedding you'll be wanting something blue," says the shop-girl. Let's see, how does the jingle go?'

'"Something old and something new,  
Something borrowed and something blue,"'

suggested Piggott.

'"No, young woman," said the mother, very superior, "our people don't hold with that Gajo colour and my darter Eldorai can't abide it."'

'They called her by her name!' thought Piggott; 'then, indeed, she must be alive'; for none knew better than he that no gypsy could bring himself to violate the sanctity of death by repeating the name of one lost and dear to him. As soon would he break open the grave of one of his dead, and scatter the bones on the churchyard path for the common herd to trample on.

'I suppose your good lady did not gather who is to be the happy man?' said Piggott, addressing the farmer.

'No, sir, she didn't catch the name, if so be as it was mentioned at all; but seemingly 'tis to be one of their own folks. The young shop-girl, who seemed a bit curious—and small blame to her—says to Mrs. Heron, "I suppose your darter will be marrying some big squire, marm?" "O no, my dear, O no!" says Mrs. Heron, "the poor 'diddy-kyes' may do as they please, but our tribe is true to our own blood."'

'An interesting story, indeed, Mr. Tompkinson, though one which we should all have been pleased to have learned sooner. However, all's well that ends well. And the wedding is to be to-morrow, you say?' He shook hands with the farmer and turned to take his departure, when another thought struck him.

'Where exactly was it that Eldorai was seen, Mr. Tompkinson?'

The farmer chuckled. 'In the old quarry, sir, where 'twas thought she'd ended her days. And now I take it she goes back there to meet her young man.' Piggott made no reply, but bade the farmer a cheerful good-night.

He moved off by a field-path skirting the tents. Once past them, acting on a sudden but irresistible impulse, he walked towards the quarry, climbed over the padlocked gate, and, seating himself upon a grassy bank by the wall, indulged in a fit of reminiscence. A heavy load had been lifted from his mind. Dear little Eldorai had not perished miserably; and, on the other hand—was it base of him to think it?—there was no longer any dread of breaking her heart by explaining that he could never be hers. 'So much for the compact!' he murmured to himself, not without amusement. But who, he wondered, was to be Eldorai's *rom*. The younger members of the Herons, Stanleys, Lovells, Boswells, passed in review before him, but certainly none of those he knew was worthy of her. Or was she, perhaps, about to marry one of those Romani hidalgos, the Ingrams, the mysterious race with which she had once childishly connected him. Somehow the farmer's supposition that she came here to meet her lover vaguely offended him. Might it not be rather that on the verge of entering upon new ties she had revisited the delf to bid good-bye to a spot so fraught with old and pleasant associations with himself? How often in past days had he and she spent happy hours here together! He recalled now her pleasure in the simple poems he had read or recited to her, the

delightful naivety of her questions and comments. And yonder, half revealed by the straggling moonlight, he could just discern the narrow ledge, hardly wide enough to afford foothold for a goat, but along which Eldorai would fearlessly trip to seat herself on the edge of a wider rock overlooking the pool. Could she, he wondered, have done this once too often and so met her death? And then he realised what nonsense he was thinking. Why, had he not just had the fullest assurance to the contrary? To-morrow morning he would revisit the tents, proffer his congratulations, and witness the ceremony in the church. Well, it was getting late, and he must be off. Yet still in a drowsy reverie he sat on, while memory after memory thronged through his mind.

He awoke with a shiver, chilled through and through by the keen night air. Wearied by the two past nights he must have suddenly fallen asleep. It took him some time to recollect where he was and how he had got there; and even then he could not account for his vivid impression on first awaking that someone had been standing there beside him. 'To-morrow,' he repeated to himself; but the chimes of a church clock interrupted him, and he stopped to count the strokes—ten, eleven, twelve! Why, it was already 'to-morrow.' He must hasten homewards. The quarry was now in pitch darkness, and he determined to keep close to the wall until he reached the gate.

Suddenly a few paces from him he heard a happy gurgling laugh, which could only belong to one person. A flood of joy welled through him. Yes, he had been right, and Eldorai had come here in the hope of meeting him. It must have been she who had stood beside him as he slept—the darling girl! In a vivid flash of self-knowledge he realised the nature of his feelings towards her, her hold over him all these years. Blind fool that he had been to think complacently of her belonging to any man except himself. At last he knew it was she who mattered, and nothing else. What did his own worldly ambition count for; or of what value would be the appreciation of a few dreary pedants compared with this one great thing that life had offered him? Surely it might not yet be too late. In tones which he scarcely recognised as his own he cried out 'Eldorai! Eldorai!'

A sweet voice—oh! the sweetest in the world—answered him. 'Here I am, Stephen. *Avava tuki.*' In the dense gloom Piggott advanced in the direction of the voice.

'This way, Rai; give me your hand.' Eagerly he stretched out



his hand, felt it clasped tightly in a smaller and colder one, and then—then, as in his dream, he was falling, falling.

At the inquest Farmer Tompkinson, who was the last person to see the unfortunate gentleman alive, deposed that he had parted from Mr. Piggott at the farm about ten o'clock on the night of the tragedy. Mr. Piggott was in excellent spirits, never better. He had declared his intention of coming up again in a day or two to see some gypsies who were encamped on the field. Mr. Piggott had left with the intention of going straight home. He agreed as to the possibility that Mr. Piggott, trying to take a short cut in the dusk, might have missed his way and fallen into the quarry.

The gypsies, who had been subpoenaed, then gave evidence. Archelaus Heron deposed that he and his family had known Mr. Piggott for several years. He was a gypsy scholar, and a kind friend to himself and his family. He last saw him some time this month seven years ago. Asked how it was he remembered so exactly, he answered that it was because of his young daughter's death. His daughter had met with a fatal accident at the same spot. His daughter's name was Proserpina. His wife, Vashti Heron, corroborated her husband's testimony as to their friendship with Mr. Piggott. He was a nice gentleman, and they were all particularly fond of him. Referring to his notes, the coroner asked whether Mrs. Heron had not recently been buying a number of feminine garments at a shop in town, and Mrs. Heron replied that she had. The clothes were for herself. Yes, she had told the shop-assistant that the clothes were for a young woman who was going to be married. That statement was untrue. It was their gypsy way, she explained, when people were too 'perquisitive' about matters that did not concern them, to make fools of them by telling them some 'condiculous' story. In the course of her evidence Mrs. Heron twice by a slip of the tongue referred to Mr. Piggott as Mr. Ingram, subsequently explaining that Mr. Ingram was another Romano Rai they knew, and that she had confused the two names.

In summing up, the coroner, a pompous gentleman who welcomed these opportunities for oratorical display, instructed the jury that there were no reasons whatever for supposing that Mr. Piggott had met his death by suicide, or by any act of violence. The farmer's evidence showed that he was in excellent health and

spirits and had made plans for the immediate future. With regard to the evidence of the gypsies, he observed that though the word 'gypsy' was commonly accepted as a term of opprobrium, yet it would be a mistake to assume that all gypsies were predisposed or addicted to crime. The two witnesses whose evidence they had heard seemed fairly respectable members of their class, and it was extremely improbable that without motive they would have assaulted a benefactor like Mr. Piggott. The jury must remember that gypsies, like Shakespeare's famous Jew, shared the common feelings of humanity. As to their reappearance at this time, nothing could surely be more natural than that they should desire to visit the spot where their daughter . . . er . . . Proserpine . . . had breathed her last. That the gypsy girl and Mr. Piggott had met with an identical fate must be regarded as a mere coincidence. The only rational inference to be drawn from it was that the quarry was imperfectly protected, and though he understood it was private property and visitors were in a technical sense trespassers, he trusted the owner—here he glanced at Mr. Tompkinson—would take adequate steps to prevent a repetition of such a disaster. In conclusion, he expressed the sympathy of the court with Mr. Piggott's friends and relatives, and his conviction that by the untimely death of this distinguished scholar, the University and . . . er . . . all that portion of the community which had at heart the grand cause of the Advancement of Learning, had suffered an irreparable loss. As directed by the coroner, the jury returned a verdict of death by misadventure, with a rider giving effect to his recommendation.

One last incident in this strange history should be recorded. On the evening of the inquest Mr. Tompkinson, happening to turn his head in the direction of the Herons' encampment, saw the two larger tents dismantled, the rods slung under the vans and the horses standing harnessed between the shafts. The smaller tent, beside which Archelaus and his women-folk stood silhouetted against the sky, was blazing furiously. Presently the flames flickered and finally subsided. Then he saw the man draw the glowing remains of the ruin together and stamp them into the earth with his feet. The gate creaked; the caravans lumbered through it and passed out of sight down the lane.

The genial President of the Romani Lore Society, who on reading the account of Piggott's accident had hastened down to attend the funeral of his friend, visited the field and was greatly disappointed to find it deserted. But he had a long conversation with Mr.

Tompkinson, who was more communicative with Sir George than he had been in the coroner's court. Together they walked to the site of the encampment. The baronet contemplatively turned over the ashes of the burnt tent with his cane. Among them was a charred fragment of some finer material, which had somehow escaped entire destruction. 'Looks as though they'd burnt the trousseau too, by Gad!' he muttered to himself. He thought regretfully of his museum, which contained unique relics and memorials of all famous Romany Ryes since the days of Andrew Boorde. But Sir George, though a collector, was a gentleman. Lighting a match he stooped down, set fire to the poor rag and calcined it with the rest.

Then, as he turned away: 'Odd affair this! Strange the gypsy lady should have twice called our friend Ingram. He can't really have been bred in that stable; eh, what? There's more in the whole business than I can fathom. Well, well! the poor old Society has lost one of its best members.'

JOHN SAMPSON.

## THE POET IN THE KITCHEN.

BY L. F. SALZMAN.

'Muse, sing the Man that did to Paris go,  
That he might taste their Soups, and Mushrooms know.'

THE Muse responded to the invitation with rather malicious alacrity, and Dr. William King, with her assistance, taking Dr. Lister as his butt and Horace's *De Arte Poetica* as his model, produced 'The Art of Cookery.' Whether there was any private and particular reason why these two doctors disagreed, who shall decide? Probably it was merely that King was a wit and Lister a meticulous pedant—two species mutually antipathetic. Whatever the cause, King had already burlesqued Lister's 'Journey to Paris,' with its laborious record of such bucolic details as the method of growing asparagus in France, in his 'Journey to London,' and now he was moved to mockery by the learned doctor's erudite edition of the works of Apicius Coelius, 'Concerning the Soups and Sauces of the Antients.' It must be admitted that a work which opens with six pages of small print notes on a single recipe for a soup tends to excite amazement rather than admiration; and that, interesting as it is to learn from Apicius how to cook everything, from ostriches and flamingos down to locusts and dormice, few readers will care to labour through the elucidatory comments drawn from the books of 'Glaucus Lorrensis of Cow-heel, Mithaecus of Hot-pots, Dionysius of Sugar Sops, Agis of Pickled Broom-buds, Epinetus of Sack-posset, Euthedemus of Apple-dumplings, Hegesippus of Black-pudding, Crito of Sow'd Maccarel, Stephanus of Limon Cream, Archytes of Hogs Harslet, Acestius of Quince Marmalade, Hicesius of Potted Pigeons, Diocles of Sweet-breads, and Philistion of Oat Cakes.' Some of these authors, it may be observed, are actually among the innumerable authorities quoted by Lister and his painful predecessor Humelbergius, the first editor of Apicius, but others, and all the titles of their works, are the frivolous inventions of Dr. King, who is also responsible for the lament that 'Bambouselbergius his Treatise of Fatning Dormise is lost.'

Allowing that Dr. Lister was fair game, it still remains to be decided whether an apology is not due to Horace for placing

cookery on a level with poetry. Certainly none of the nine fair sister Muses concerned herself with cookery—a fact which may be commended to the notice of those members of the Senate of the University of Cambridge who still consider that woman's sole domain should be the kitchen. Yet it would seem that cooks, like poets, are born as much as made, for :

'Tis a sage Question, if the Art of Cooks  
Is lodged by Nature, or attained by Books :  
That Man will never frame a noble Treat  
Whose whole Dependance lies on some Receipt.  
Then, by pure Nature everything is spoil'd,  
She knows no more than stew'd, bak'd, rost and boyl'd.  
When Art and Nature join th' Effect will be  
Some nice Ragoust or charming Fricasy.'

Nor is this the sole resemblance between those who minister to the feasts of reason and of appetite.

'Judgment provides the Meat in Season fit,  
Which by the Genius drest, its Sauce is Wit.  
The Critick strikes out all that is not just,  
And 'tis ev'n so the Butler chips his Crust.'

(Though what the devil the butler is doing in the cook's galley is more than I can say ; he should have no concern with any crust beyond that upon his port. Still, I suppose, by the eighteenth century the butler had fallen somewhat from his high estate and had taken upon him some of the duties of the pantler, even if he were not reduced to helping in the kitchen.)

'Poets and Pastry Cooks will be the same,  
Since both of them their Images must frame.  
Chimeras from the Poet's Fancy flow,  
The Cook contrives his Shapes in real Dough.'

From which it may be deduced that of the two artists the cook has the more solid claim to be regarded as a benefactor of the human race. The artistic side of his craft was still more evident in earlier days when his 'shapes' took the form of those 'subtleties'—groups of figures—such as 'Maydon Mary that holy virgyne, and Gabrielle gretynge hur with an Ave'—modelled in paste, sugar, and less digestible substances, which in medieval times were placed upon the table between each course for the edification of the guests. Such

'subtleties' had long been dead when Dr. King wrote—though, perhaps, their attenuated ghosts still linger in the decorations of suburban wedding-cakes—and the cook's skill in shaping was devoted to the strictly business-like decoration of his pie-crust.

'You that from pliant Paste would Fabricks raise,  
Expecting thence to gain immortal Praise,  
Your knuckles try, and let your sinews know  
Their Power to knead and give the Form to Dough,  
Chuse your Materials right, your seas'ning fix,  
And with your Fruit resplendent sugar mix :  
From thence of course the Figure will arise,  
And Elegance adorn the Surface of your Pies.'

But, at the same time, as our author very truly remarks in another place :

'Unless some sweetness at the Bottom lye,  
Who cares for all the crinkling of the Pye ?'

Pies and pasties are to my mind the most poetic and seductive section of kitchen-craft. The roast beef of Old England, the solid joints consecrated by immemorial custom to the Sunday's midday meal, excellent as they are for the satisfying of hunger, move more to slumber than to song. There is no mystery about these compositions of plain cooks. They are gross and prosaic. I do not care to read even in Homer—

'How lov'd Patroclus with Achilles joins  
To quarter out the Ox and spit the Loins.'

Nor, on the other hand, do I care greatly for 'French Kick-shaws or Ogllos brought from Spain'—fit subjects, perhaps, for an epigram or *vers libres*, but too unsubstantial for a sonnet or heroic couplets. The pie combines all graces in itself. It is sustaining, fulfilling the first purpose of food ; it is savoury, whetting the appetite it satisfies ; it is seductive in colour and adornment ; and above all it is mysterious. One round of beef is much as another, one leg of mutton differs little from another, even if it masquerade as lamb by appearing with mint-sauce in place of the onion-sauce, which since the days of the methodical, Miltonic carrier, Hobson, has always marked the elder sheep-flesh ; but with a pie there is ever an element of the exciting. What may not lurk beneath its crust ? Lovers of Scott will remember how little Geoffrey Hudson was

brought to table in a pie—a historic incident to which Dr. King makes allusion :

‘Let never fresh Machines your Pastry try,  
Unless Grandees or Magistrates are by,  
Then you may put a Dwarf into a Pye.  
Or if you’d fright an Alderman or Mayor,  
Within a Pasty lodge a living Hare ;  
Then midst their gravest Furs shall Mirth arise,  
And all the Guild pursue with joyful Cries.’

Then there was the great pie of the nameless king, at the opening of which four-and-twenty blackbirds sang ; and the fearsome pies of Sweeney Todd ; and the herring-pies, flavoured with ginger and galingale, which the ancient city of Norwich rendered yearly to the King. If our pies are not likely to contain spiced herrings, living blackbirds, or dead men, there still remain abundant possibilities. Will the first lifted wedge of crust reveal pork, rabbit, or pigeon ; is it a pie of the Great Twin Brethren, veal and ham ; or a multiple pie of game ? or, by some whimsical error of identification, shall we find fruit where we expected meat ? For the matter of that, we may find without any error both meat and fruit, apples and fat mutton, in one pie down West, for

‘Cornwall Squab-Pye, and Devon White-Pot brings,  
And Lei’ster Beans and Bacon, Food of Kings !’

From the pre-eminence which the learned poet assigns to Leicester I assume that he never tasted a Sussex bacon-pudding with beans. As for Cornwall—in that ancient kingdom they put not only pippins and pepper and mutton, but all things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, into their pies ; and they do say that the reason the Devil would never go to Cornwall was because he feared that they would put him into one.

‘Trotter from Quince and Apples first did frame  
A Pye which still retains his proper Name,  
Tho’ common grown, yet with white Sugar strow’d  
And butter’d right, its Goodness is allow’d.’

More than two centuries have passed ; the goodness of the blend of quince and apples in a pie is still allowed, but Trotter’s name has fallen from memory. Yet he, perhaps, hoped to be ‘immortal made as Kit-cat by his Pies.’ Vain hope ! How short is most men’s immortality ! One author assures us that Monteth ‘has



by one Vessell sav'd his Name from Death.' Perhaps he has ; but I fear that he and his wine-cooler will linger on in memory only by the grace of industrious collectors of old furniture ; and Kit Catling's fame would have crumbled with his pie-crust had it not been for the portraits drawn by frequenters of his eating-house. One man and one alone is likely to pass down, through generations yet unborn, to the remotest limits of posterity, inseparably connected with an article of food—the Earl of Sandwich. When all his deeds are forgotten and the records of them mouldered into dust his name will still be in the mouths of men. And not one of them will give so much as a moment's thought to the Earl himself. Such is Fame.

Other forgotten celebrities figure in our poem ; among them Lockit—not, apparently, the father of Lucy and unprepossessing gaoler of Macheath, but the keeper of an eating-house of repute ; for Dr. King in his epilogue, wherein he deals unkindly with Dr. Lister's soups and sauces, says : ' What estates might Brawn or Lockit have got in those days, when Apicius, only for boiling of Sprouts after a new fashion, deservedly came into the good graces of Drusus who then commanded the Roman armies ? ' The reference to his house has sufficient topical interest to be worth quoting as an instance of history repeating itself :

' The Fate of things lies always in the Dark,  
What Cavalier wou'd know St. James's Park ?  
For Locket's stands where Gardens once did spring,  
And Wild-Ducks quack where Grass-hoppers did sing.  
A Princely Palace on that space does rise  
Where Sidley's noble Muse found Mulberries.'

With a little adaptation, such as putting the grasshoppers back at the expense of the wild ducks and taking ' princely palace,' as applied to the Passport Office, as ' wrote sarkastik,' this is singularly apt to the present time.

So much for a historic parallel, unforeseen by the poet ; but by way of a contrast or change in taste observe that—

' Our Fathers most admir'd their Sauces sweet,  
And often asked for Sugar with their Meat ;  
They butter'd Currants on fat Veal bestow'd,  
And Rumps of Beef with Virgin Honey strew'd.  
Inspid Tast, old Friend, to them who Paris know,  
Where Rocombole, Shallot, and the rank Garlick grow.'

In the last two lines there is evidently a reference to Dr. Lister's carefully recorded researches in the market-gardens of Paris; while the beef and honey—not a usual combination, so far as my knowledge of early cookery extends—points to a recipe in Apicius for keeping fresh meat by immersing it in honey. The section of Apicius which follows tells of preserving brawn (*ferculum*, comments Lister, *apud nos antiquissimum, lautissimum atque mirabile*): 'Place it in mustard made with vinegar, salt, and honey, so that it is covered, and when you wish to use it you will be surprised (*miraberis*).' With this conclusion all will agree who have ever observed the surprise of a dog that has bolted a piece of meat coated with what Dr. King calls 'the roguish Mustard, dang'rous to the Nose.'

Vegetables figure but meanly in our poem. We are, indeed, bidden—

'Your infant Pease to Sparrowgrass <sup>1</sup> prefer,  
Which to the supper you may best refer.'

And there is a slighting reference to cucumbers as the customary food of those ninth parts of men, the tailors—

'Ev'n Taylors at their yearly Feasts look great,  
And all their Cucumbers are turned to Meat'—

a change which may have benefited their digestion as well as their pride; though possibly the clammy cucumber accords better with the slow-moving blood of a sedentary race than with the hotter humours of more active men.

'There are whose blood  
Impetuous rages thro' the turgid veins,  
Who better bear the fiery fruits of Ind,  
Than the moist Melon or pale Cucumber.'

If the reader is a connoisseur of style he will not require to be told that this last quotation is from another hand than Dr. King's. But he may require to be told that that hand was the hand of Dr. Armstrong; for I much fear that his precious poem on 'The Art of Preserving Health,' published in the eventful year 1745, is less widely known than it deserves to be. Of our three doctors, Dr. Lister

<sup>1</sup> Is the Athenaeum still famous for its asparagus? Dr. Lister writes—in the section on *Asparagi*, which consists of six words by Apicius and three hundred by his editors—'*magnitudinis immensae memorantur apud Athenaeum*.'

was a pedant who wrote passable prose in Latin and English, Dr. King was a wit who wrote burlesque verse, but Dr. Armstrong was a poet of the utmost polish and refinement, who could describe a stomach-ache in language of such beauty and allusive delicacy as would draw tears from the eyes of elderly spinsters. If Dr. King had occasion to refer to an egg he would bluntly call it an egg, but Dr. Armstrong, whose bedside manners must have been a joy to behold, would write :

‘Some even the generous nutriment detest  
Which, in the shell, the sleeping Embryo rears.’

With similar sweet modulations Cheshire cheese becomes in his skilful hands ‘that which Cestria tends, tenacious paste of solid milk.’ So, too, where that sound old dietician, Andrew Borde, declared that ‘olde beefe and kowe-flesshe doth engender melancholy,’ the poet warbles these pleasing variations on his theme :

‘And if the Steer must fall,  
In youth and vigour glorious let him die ;  
Nor stay till rigid age, or heavy ails,  
Absolve him ill-requited from the yoke.’

There is an equal elegance about his preliminary advice to his readers to eat plenty of vegetables and have their meat stewed or boiled rather than roast (‘Of fried metes be ware, for they are fumose in dede,’ and ‘*frixæ nocent, elixæ fovent, assata cohercent*’ were good medieval maxims of diet).

‘Let the cool  
The moist relaxing vegetable store  
Prevail in each repast : your food supplied  
By bleeding life, be gently wafted down,  
By soft decoction and a mellowing heat,  
To liquid balm ; or, if the solid mass  
You chuse, tormented in the boiling wave ;  
That thro’ the thirsty channels of the blood  
A smooth diluted chyle may ever flow.’

Again, when he comes to the subject of drinks, Dr. Armstrong manages to wax lyrical on the subject of water—an uninspiring fluid, which Borde declared (not from personal experience, as he never touched it, wisely sticking to good ale) ‘is not holosome, sole

by it selfe, for an Englysshe man.' The advice never to drink stagnant water without boiling it is thus beautifully expressed :

'Though thirst were ne'er so resolute, avoid  
The sordid lake and all such drowsy floods  
As fill from Lethe Belgia's slow canals,  
(Squalid with generation and the birth  
Of little monsters,) till the power of fire  
Has from profane embraces disengag'd  
The violated lymph.'

It might be thought from his warm praise of water that the good doctor was as teetotal as the gentleman who amended so drastically the drinking poem sent him by the Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table ; but it was not so ; he was equally enthusiastic over the virtues of wine, and I suspect that he was a graduate of Cambridge (did not Mr. Birrell once comment on the charming candour of Cambridge men, poets especially—shown in their universal willingness to admit that they had been drunk *once* ?) However that may be, although condemning habitual excess, he condones and even encourages an occasional spree. (Had he not lived before the days of 'bump-suppers' I could have sworn that he was a rowing man.)

'Meantime, I would not always dread the bowl  
Nor every trespass shun. The feverish strife,  
Rous'd by the rare debauch, subdues, expels  
The loitering crudities that burden life ;  
And, like a torrent full and rapid, clears  
Th' obstructed tubes.'

Without denying the accuracy of this description of the results of getting drunk, I feel that his advice, as Nebuchadnezzar remarked apropos of his vegetarian diet, 'may be wholesome, but it is not good.' More in accordance with the spirit of our enlightened age is Dr. Armstrong's other ringing call, blending joviality judiciously with discretion—

' . . . let the mantling bowl  
Of keen Sherbet the fickle taste relieve.'

With which depressing paean we will take our leave of our three doctors and the ancient gastronomer royal, Apicius Coelius.

L. F. SALZMAN.

## WINCHELSEA.

BY A. C. BENSON.

WHAT a strange thing it is that certain towns and villages give one so strong an impression of a distinct and pervading individuality, while other places, fully as interesting and beautiful it may be, have no such quality about them. It is a difficult thing to define; but while some towns seem a mere fortuitous collection of houses, even though many of the houses may have character and distinction, other towns seem to be the expression of a personality almost, inconsistent perhaps, and with whims and oddities, but yet essentially one. The details of such a place seem not so much the result of human fancies and preferences as the effect of a guiding and controlling spirit, selecting and eliminating, and moulding the whole into a harmony of design and execution. As you wander at leisure, every street, almost every building, confirms and deepens the impression. You turn a corner and see, not something surprising, but something that you almost expected to see. It is indeed what the Romans meant by the words *genius loci*, a presiding spirit of which the place is an embodiment, and whose masterful or pathetic temperament can be discerned in every corner.

I walked one evening in a great orange-flaming sunset from Rye across the fields to Winchelsea. The steep brown-copsed bastions crowned by quaint gabled houses, the wide flat pasturelands of the valley that folds away into the hills by Brede, and the high blue shadowy line of Fairlight down beyond, looked very solemn and romantic in the evening light. There they sit, the two beautiful little towns, Rye and Winchelsea, regarding each other across the green marshland; but how different they are! Rye is a busy prosperous hive of cheerful folk with plenty of brisk and vivid interests, its presiding genius an active, sensible creature, shrewd and sociable, fond of comfortable beauty and much in love with life, but neither romantic nor mysterious. From the old irregular gabled and mullioned houses, the demure and dignified brick mansions, down to the tall black-timbered warehouses on the quay, it is all full of sedate movement, of solid and contented life.

But this is not so with Winchelsea. There is nothing either dejected or decayed about it. It is trim and flourishing-looking in every respect. There are not, I suppose, more than a hundred houses there, and yet they are disposed and arranged about the

central square with a semblance of streets and alleys, as though it were a much more considerable place. Indeed it has, to my mind, a somewhat ghost-like appearance, the unsubstantial phantom of a substantial town.

Again, the majority of houses in Winchelsea are comfortable and roomy places, clearly the abodes of well-to-do if not wealthy people; and yet there is nothing to account for the presence, in so solitary a spot, of so many prosperous households. It has not the air of a holiday resort; it seems to have a demure life of its own; yet it appears to have no tangible connection with its own past, no visible means of subsistence, and no particular occupation; while, except for a football field, it hardly seems to have any sources of recreation. But, for all that, its charm is great; it is consecrated to recollection and repose, and lost in pleasant reverie; the presiding spirit of the place would seem to be given up to meditation, and to be engaged in recalling, neither regretfully nor complacently, a glorious and active past—like a retired admiral, let us say, with an adventurous career behind him, but entirely content, after his rough experiences, to be leading a quiet and comfortable domestic life. Anyone who went to Winchelsea expecting something romantic and forlorn would be disappointed; what he will find is a place most picturesquely situated, with enchanting views and prospects in every direction, a noble fragment of a church, leafy avenues and steep-sloping copses, an engaging assemblage of very decorous and comely houses, and a pair of crumbling mediæval gateways which seem almost out of harmony with the trim security of the place. Indeed, when I consider the strangely contrasting elements it combines, its impregnable and embattled air, its approaches spanned by melancholy and forbidding towers, and then the innocent familiarity, the comfortable amiability of its inner aspect, as though a child might have donned a ferocious mask, I believe it to be one of the most surprising and unaccountable places I have ever set eyes upon.

Now in the first place it must be remembered that the present town of Winchelsea is not the original town at all. That lay out in the Camber marshland, two or three miles away, and was built upon a sea-girt island. But the whole level was gradually sinking, owing to some subterranean collapse of the earth's crust, perhaps: the place had become more and more subject to floods and high tides; and at last in 1250 there was a great inrush of the sea, which destroyed above three hundred houses and three churches,

and many of the inhabitants were drowned; a few years later the crops failed and the trees began to wither, and soon it was clear that old Winchelsea was doomed.

At the end of the century a new site for the town was chosen, an admirable place for a port liable to constant invasion from France. It was a steep sandstone cliff surrounded by marshes, with the sea on the south and east and with a river on the north. It is only connected with the neighbouring uplands by a narrow ridge to the south-west. At an immense expense, the bastions were made steeper, and the tableland at the top levelled; the whole was surrounded by a wall with towers and gates. How extensive was the circuit of the town may be divined from the fact that one of the gates, known as the New Gate, a most romantic ruin, still stands out in the fields nearly a mile away from the church. Many hundreds of houses were built, in carefully planned squares and streets. A majestic church was erected, a choir with nave and transepts. There was a monastery of Greyfriars founded, and a house of Blackfriars, two parish churches—since destroyed—three hospitals, and other public buildings. The inhabitants of old Winchelsea mostly migrated thither, tempted by grants of land and houses; and for two hundred years the place was one of very great importance. It provided ships for the navy, it had a great import and export trade in sea-borne merchandise. It was not only a rendezvous of commerce, but a port of embarkation for military and naval expeditions. There were a Mayor and Corporation, called Jurats, and many civic officials. The town appointed four of the Cinque Port Barons. The Barons of the Cinque Ports had formerly the privilege of bearing the canopies over the King and Queen at coronations. They varied their costume from time to time, but as late as the Coronation of George IV the barons from Winchelsea wore vests of scarlet satin with slashed sleeves, trunk hose of blue satin, red silk stockings, white kid shoes, a surtout of dark blue satin, and a black Spanish hat and feather! Winchelsea sent two members to Parliament, not very notable people, for the most part; but one of them was the well-known Lord Chancellor Brougham, and another the famous Earl Grey.

And then what picturesque things happened there! Think of Edward I going to survey the town, then in course of building, and riding a skittish horse, which took fright at the noise made by the clappers of a windmill and jumped over the parapet to the horror of all beholders, slithered down a steep slope for twelve feet,



and arrived unharmed on a tiny footpath without even unseating His Majesty.

Or recall the great fight off Winchelsea in 1350 with forty Spanish ships of the line, carrying ten thousand men: Edward III and the Black Prince on board the English flagship named *Salle du Roi*, the King in a velvet jacket and beaver hat—very becoming, says the chronicler—and listening with lively delight to a German dance called 'Sir John Chandos' played by his minstrels, when the sailor at the masthead shouted 'Ho, I spy a ship!' Out flew the squadron about the time of vespers, and after infinite grapplings and boardings, much noble blood spilt and many gallant vessels sent to the bottom, the Black Prince saved with difficulty from his foundering ship, and the King's life endangered by a mighty leak in the *Salle du Roi*, the victory was won before night-fall, and the Spanish fleet in headlong flight; and all the time the poor Queen watching the horrible encounter from Winchelsea hill.

But things did not always go so well with Winchelsea: for centuries it was exposed to sudden and determined attacks by the French. In 1337, for instance, Rye and Winchelsea had been raided, and much mischief done; but an English squadron arrived in the nick of time, chased the marauders back to France, burnt a good part of the town of Boulogne, and hanged twelve captains of the French fleet, who had fallen into their hands, in a row.

Some twenty years later, in 1359, a great French fleet made a sudden descent on Winchelsea, sacked and burnt the town, killed a great number of the inhabitants, and carried off much plunder to France; so unexpected was the attack that most of the population were at church hearing Mass when the French entered the town. Exactly a year later they came again, and this time laid waste much of the surrounding country. Again in 1376 they came, and this time burned the greater part of Rye; but the Abbot of Battle, whose monastery owned much property at Winchelsea, came to the rescue, and sent a message to the French admiral that he was a religious man and had not come to fight but to preserve the peace of the country. This was taken by the French to imply a lack of courage, and they assaulted the town, hurling great stones into the streets from catapults, which destroyed many of the houses; but the abbot and his men repelled them at every point, and finally drove the invaders back to their ships. So it went on, until in 1380 the French seized the place, destroyed one of the gates and the nave of the church, systematically harried the neighbouring country, and inflicted

on Winchelsea such irretrievable damage that it never recovered its old prosperity.

It must not be supposed that Winchelsea merely opposed a passive resistance to these various attacks. On the contrary each of them was followed by a vindictive retaliation. Indeed, at one time the mariners of Winchelsea enjoyed a rather bad reputation for a mild kind of domestic piracy. They did not only harry the French, their legitimate foes, but impounded foreign barques, refusing ransom, and even confiscated cargoes of herrings which peaceful fishermen had caught and were conveying home.

Life, indeed, in mediaeval Winchelsea can never have been dull, whatever else it may have been. But as time went on the sea began to recede, the roadstead grew more and more shallow, and the estuary more choked with mud. The prosperity of the town rapidly declined. By 1538, when Henry VIII built the great castle of Camber in the marsh below to defend Rye and Winchelsea from invasion, there was little left at Winchelsea to defend. The castle stands there still a mile away—a huge pile of solid masonry lined with brick, with deep-set gun embrasures and underground corridors and sculptured cornices—a noble ruin, overgrown with ivy, its grassy banks and mounds grazed over by peaceful sheep, all solitary and silent, the very embodiment of grim and useless strength.

When Elizabeth came to the throne, a piteous petition was presented by Winchelsea to the Council, recounting the ancient glories of the place, describing the ruinous streets and the great crypts and cellars of dilapidated houses, 'fit for famous merchants.' They asked that a new harbour might be excavated and the old sea-channel cleared. But it was all in vain. The Queen visited the town, and admired the houses so much and 'the city-like deportment of the people, there then being several gentry,' that she said, perhaps with a touch of irony, that it deserved the name of Little London. But even this royal compliment was of no avail; and a few years later there were only sixty households left, the sea having forsaken the town. In 1832 there were only nine freeholders with a parliamentary vote; but, though shorn of its ancient glories, there can have been very few people in England who were so well represented in the Council of the nation as the inhabitants of Winchelsea.

The Church of St. Thomas stands in the centre of the town, and was finished about 1292. Originally it was a great cruciform structure with a central tower. But the nave was destroyed at

an early date, in the course of one of the French raids. It has sometimes been questioned whether it was ever actually completed ; but a tiled pavement was discovered a few years ago in the course of some excavations which would seem to prove that it had at least a brief period of existence. There is no trace of it left, for in 1792 the bell-tower, which stood to the south-west of the church, was destroyed, and what remained of the nave was demolished, the stones being used for the repair of Rye Harbour.

The walls of the ruined transepts are still standing, but the western arches of the choir and the choir aisles were walled up at an early date, a Tudor porch added, perhaps from one of the demolished churches, and a bell-chamber with a low tiled spire over the western end of the north choir aisle. The result is a church of no great size, but finely proportioned, lofty, and of extraordinary dignity and picturesqueness. The tracery of the high windows is graceful and very original in treatment. A fine flying buttress at the east end of the north aisle adds much to the sense of confused richness which the whole building gives.

Within, the choir is full of stately ornament. There are two rows of fine canopied sedilia with crockets and pinnacles, and five great tombs with canopies and recumbent effigies, one of which, representing a warrior in mail with the feet crossed and the hands holding a sculptured heart, with a lion at the feet, is almost certainly the tomb of Gervase Alard, Admiral of the Cinque Ports in the reign of Edward I, and is conspicuous for the way in which the subdued wealth of the design serves to emphasise the stern tranquillity of the old knight, who lies in all the magnificence of a panoply not made for show but for grim and deadly use ; and nothing in all Winchelsea so embodies the old fierce history of the place and its terrible hazards as the figure of this war-worn veteran translated, in his habit as he was, from the din of battle and the clash of ships, grappling and heaving on the surges, into the peace and silence of the quiet church with all its soaring lines and lavish traceries of sculptured stone.

Once since his entombment has the body of the great admiral been exposed to human view. A settlement took place a few years ago which loosened the masonry of the wall of the south aisle. Excavations were made in the churchyard, and a vault beneath the church was revealed in which the body of Gervase Alard was seen, swathed in lead and lying in a stone coffin. The remains were not disturbed, the masonry of the vault was replaced, and he rests where he had rested for more than five centuries.

More moving still, if less vigorously inspiring, is the effigy of an unknown youth which lies, together with two other figures, a mail-clad knight and a lady of high degree, under rather rude canopies of simple and almost perfunctory design, in what is called the Farncombe Chantry at the western end of the north aisle.

These three monuments are somewhat mysterious; their names are not known, and they are of a very early date, long anterior to the date of the church in which they lie. Tradition says that they represent a father, a mother, and an only son; and they were in all probability brought from some demolished church in old Winchelsea when the town was finally abandoned.

The effigy of the young man has a singularly arresting quality. His form is slender and delicate; he lies, his head supported on a cushion, vested in a long secular robe, with loose sleeves buttoned at the wrist, and buckled shoes. His hair lies in crisp flat curls over the smooth forehead, and is brought forward in graceful tresses over the ears. He was too young, perhaps, even to have borne arms; but in spite of the archaic stiffness of the monument and the rigid formality of the adjusted folds, the tender care with which the little characteristic details of dress and attitude, so full of youthful grace and charm, are rendered, speaks unmistakably of love and desolate grief, of wistful remembrance and high hopes unfulfilled. The craftsman's skill was not great, but the language of the human heart speaks in his work.

The church has suffered more than once from well-meant if over-zealous restoration. A Late Perpendicular east window was removed and commonplace Decorated tracery substituted. More heartrending still is the fact that the stained glass which filled the Perpendicular window was taken down and sold in fragments to visitors who desired to have a memento of the building. A few panels which were saved have been inserted in one of the aisle windows. One little enigma remains unsolved. At the very top of the western wall, near the apex of the gable, is a small mullioned Tudor window of two lights, which must presumably have given light to some chamber above the vaulting of the transept. It may perhaps have been a watchman's cell, but it is impossible to suggest a satisfactory solution. The later restorations, especially of the tombs and their canopies, have been notably judicious and appropriate. The whole church is beautifully kept and furnished, and its adornment is extremely dignified and beautiful, especially that of the high altar.

Of other mediaeval buildings there remain but the three gates—Strand Gate, New Gate, and Pipewell Gate—some scanty ruins of the Greyfriars Priory, and a hospital, and a somewhat grim little edifice called the Court Hall or the Water Bailiff's Prison, which abuts on the churchyard, its massive walls and such of its little ancient windows as remain unrestored suggesting that justice rather than mercy was the purpose which it kept in view. Close by is the place where John Wesley preached under a tree in 1790, and brought conviction to many troubled souls.

Another pleasant characteristic of Winchelsea is the wealth and variety of old names, both graceful and homely, borne by houses and meadow-closes. Bear Square recalls the popular amusements of the age; more innocent is Ballad Singers' Plat. Paradise is the agreeable title of an old house and garden. Trojan's Hall has a high romantic flavour, while Tinker's Garden comes at the other end of the scale. As to the meaning of Grind-pepper Well, the mind loses itself in fond conjecture. Pewes and Holly Rood are innocent meadows lying under Great Gallows Hill. Fryers Orchard and Saffron Garden have the true mediaeval flavour. The Firebrand is an uncomfortable name for a house, but The Salutation is an excellent sign for an inn. Whether all these names still exist I do not know, but they are to be found in the old maps; and so far from thinking that names are merely convenient and legal appellations, I have a secret belief that they often embalm the inner essence of a place, and have an almost magical influence upon its fortunes. So far from thinking that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, I feel that quite half the charm of the flower would be gone if it were called, let us say, a mangold-wurzel! And at Winchelsea, at all events, I can hardly doubt that much of the subtle charm of the place is bound up with its quaint and satisfying directory.

The view from Winchelsea is perhaps even more beautiful than anything in the town itself. If you stand by the Strand Gate and look to the south, on the right is the dim line of the Fairlight Down with its steep sea-front, which separates the Rye valley from Hastings. The down rises to a height of 500 feet, and the tower of Fairlight Church, which crowns the summit, is visible for miles away. From Fairlight Down, grassy pastoral hills come sloping gradually eastward to Winchelsea. At your feet lies the great green expanse of the Marsh, as it is called, a wide tract of pasture intersected by many dikes and sea-channels, and a couple of miles away lies the blue line of the sea, dotted with fishing boats,

and big steamers moving hull-down on the far horizon. To the left over another wide expanse of marsh, where the grey, squat tower of Camber can be discerned, lies Rye, its huddled red-tiled houses climbing to the top of the hill, culminating in the long roof of the church and its low tiled spire. To the south of Rye the coast-line runs far out seaward. You can see the roofs of the village of Rye Harbour, and the low sand-dunes of Camber; behind that lies mile upon mile of marsh, with the tall church towers of Lydd and New Romney among clumps of trees, and the bare shingled promontory of Dungeness; and behind all these far to the east the low line, touched with white, of the Folkestone cliffs. But perhaps one of the most beautiful of all the details of the view is the little old sea-cliff which runs from Winchelsea to Rye along the north of the marsh; it must be centuries since the waves broke at its base, and the sandstone fronts have crumbled down; it is all clad with grass now, rough pasture, ridged with sheep-walks, with patches of bracken and copse and here or there a holt of taller trees; at the sloping upland are big brick farms, with white-cowled oast-houses and high-shouldered barns; but there is something in the delicate moulding of the cliff-front which tells of the subtle energies of wind and wave—the past has set its mark upon it, a mark that cannot be obliterated.

And thus the whole region has a quality of its own, a quality which appeals to imaginative minds both artistically and emotionally. Turner made a beautiful picture of Winchelsea, perhaps a little overstrained in significance, as his manner was, and missed the quietness which is one of the essential charms of the whole place. The picture was bought by Ruskin, and Ruskin came to Winchelsea and fell in love with it. Millais came there, and his picture 'Safe from the Din of Battle' is a study of the monument of Gervase Alard. Thackeray too visited Winchelsea and made it the birthplace of Denis Duval, and made Rye the scene of his schooling. The funeral of the Countess of Saverne, it will be remembered, which is one of the most vivid scenes in the book, takes place in the deserted Priory graveyard there.

There is an ancient well in the place known as St. Leonard's Well; and the tradition is that if anyone drinks of its cool, deep-lying waters, he cannot cast the memory of Winchelsea out of his mind, but is bound to return to it some time, however far he may wander. That is a delicate allegory of the charm which Winchelsea, and places like Winchelsea, exert on the human mind and heart.

PORL.

BY AMIT AYA.

I.

'Clear, boyish eyes,  
Whose fearless look unconsciously defies  
Trouble and care;

Let sages envy—fools despise  
The faith you wear.'

MUD on the ground, mud in the air, damp chill depression, loneliness everywhere.

A friendly fire-glow from the potato-can at the corner and a warmer breath in the air suggestive of Nature's necessity.

Then I met Porl.

A form ill-clad, a small face poked between huge ears, a full, wide mouth topping an insignificant chin, and eyes brightening the world—poor in size, doubtful in colour, but with just a glint of morning in them which flashed youth into the dingy street, and promised Eternity.

Porl round a baked potato was a study, the mode of consumption pointing a strong business propensity. Alas! the rapidity of the demolishment suggested an appetite ill required.

Poor Porl!

Though I did not pity her that night when she came out of the fog into my life; rather I hailed her the impersonation of Philosophy and Hope, those (when Faith and Love are sleeping) twin deterrents from suicide.

Pagan? Perhaps; but then Porl was pagan. Her gods were 'Justice' and 'Bravado.' 'She's littler en me; musn't 'it 'er.—She's ony got 'apeny, I got tuppence; treat 'er ter pep'mints.—'E ain't got no muvver, pore little chap, git ole Fred down the tater-stall ter give 'im one fer nuthin'—*sneak it if 'e don't*,' pretty well sums up her creed of justice. Her bravado was embodied in 'Don't let 'em never find out yer care.'

'Ole Fred,' who was very fat, with a discontented facial expression—a rare combination of optimism in the flesh and



pessimism in the spirit which impressed one oddly—shook his head over Porl, but he never failed to give the potatoes she demanded, 'Cos why, sir? She'd bone 'em if I didn't. Do I know why she's called Porl? Bless yer, the parson thought she was a boy, 'er mother too ill to go, an' 'er aunt Eliza bein' a bit 'eavy—it bein' Christmas time—she went ter sleep when 'e was dandlin' the baby; an' 'im wantin' 'is dinner, an' 'avin' bin preachin' erbout the lusts er the flesh, 'e called 'er Porl jes ter get rid of 'er.'

'Give 'im er tater, Fred; 'e don't look well.'

I hastened to assure Fred that I would defray the expense of the dainty, and found myself immediately in possession of the largest 'tater' from the stall.

'Yer in trouble.'

'No, Porl.'

'Wot is it, then?'

'I don't know.'

'Huh!—feel better when yer've et that.'

Porl balanced cleverly on a half-brick on the curb-stone; I did full justice to the potato.

'I've ofren felt that way meself, shows yer stummick's empty; nuthin' like grub fer the 'ump. My muvver, yer know, she finks different—berlieves in drink, bert I don't—it makes yer thet silly.'

I smiled at the crudity of the morality; truly there *would* be fewer drunkards was a sense of the ridiculous more widely existent.

'What is your father, Porl?'

'Dunno; 'e scooted—muvver's a hotten, yer know.'

I learned from 'Ole Fred' that the mother was seldom sober, Porl holding, meanwhile, a heated altercation with a boy who had inadvertently pushed her off her brick.

'Where yer shuvin' to?'

'I ain't er shuvin'.'

'Wot d'yer corl it then?'

'Oh! stow yer giblets.'

'You shut yer cod's-faice.'

'Oo yer corlin' cod's-faice?'

'Garn! open it wider an' swaller yerself; fish 's good fer them wot ain't got no brains.'

'I'll punch yer 'ead.'

'That's it, coward—it er gell.'

A violent scuffle ensued, from which Porl emerged victorious, her ragged jacket revealing more of her shabby frock than before, her face crimson from the struggle. The discomfited boy departed blubbering, nursing a thumb bitten to the bone, and showing a patch of dirty shin where Porl's nailed boot had caught his stocking. The triumphant girl ignored my expression of disapproval and grinned derisively—that universal gamin grin, assimilated from contact with and diffusing that element of the streets, which scares decorum in the byways and flouts discipline on the highways.

Consider.

These sexless, elusive gamins of the gutters; these apparently motiveless *improbabilities* of the masses—often neglected in the schemes of statesmen, ever forgotten in the pride of nations—grow and grow until they become the *certainities* which weight or lessen the national balance. A possible danger to be controverted; a certain force to be calculated. Deep in the pit of national life, stirring, surging, swelling, shrinking. Hooligans? what you will; but THERE always.

. . . . .

I met Porl often from that night, sometimes at the 'tater-stall,' more frequently elsewhere.

## II.

'Tis wasted toil  
To scatter seed  
On stony ground  
Where weeds abound;  
To meet the need  
First, till the soil.'

'How old are you, Porl?'

'Fifteen.'

I had thought her between ten and twelve.

'Have you ever been to a Sunday School?'

'Went once—ain't been since.'

'Why not?'

'Oh! teacher torked sech er lot er rot erbout God.'

'Don't be wicked, Porl.'

'I aint wicked—it's 'im.'

'What did your teacher say?'

'Never mind wot *she* sed—I say, wot erbout Wally Bligh's legs?'

'Wally's mother let him fall when he was a little boy and——'

'Huh!'

'She was to blame—not God.'

'Well,' stubbornly, 'e made 'is muvver; Wally didn't.'

I felt the adult ineptitude to grapple with the reasoning of a child, and could only murmur, half teasingly, 'You'll never go to Heaven, Porl.'

'Don't want; guess I should be lonely, 'cordin' ter wot teacher sed.'

'How about day-school?'

Porl looked like running away, but, changing her mind, faced me, glinting her eyes defiantly.

'Does the school-board man come after you?'

'Rather'—with a grin; 'but 'e don't catch me; 'e ain't bin lately. Muvver jored 'im, yer know.'

Then with greater defiance, 'I don't like school—never 'ave; kids call me pig's-ears. An' las' time I went, teacher sed some-thin' 'bout little pitchers—I ain't bin since—'sides, I'm goin' out soon.'

'What do you intend to do?'

'Git married.'

I expressed astonishment at the assurance.

'Corse I am; gells 'ave to; they look down on yer if yer don't; like teacher Alice, yer know, in the Infernse—now I *do* like 'er. Bob Lee 'e corled 'er ole maid once; I punched 'is 'ead. She goes ter church an' all that, *bert she's good*; she sez if yer do wot's right it don't much matter wot 'appens, not even if yer goes ter the wall yerself—bert I dunno. I ast 'er once why she was orl on 'er lonesome, an' she sed, cos 'e married someone else; an' I sed, didn't 'e care fer yer? an' she sed, yers, dear, as soft as if she was erfraid er wakin' er kid; an' I sed, wot mugs yer must 'ave been not ter 'ave one ernother; an' she blew 'er nose an' smiled sort er funny like, an' sed, 'e went away, Porl, an' 'e fergot me, men easily forget—yer'll find it out yerself some day; bert I don't berlieve 'e fergot 'er—it was er muddle, that 's wot it wos—them affairs orfen git muddled up; someone gits torkin'—*I've 'eard em*; an' then the feller gits sick; fellers is sech fools; 'fraid er wot people say; ain't got no pluck; mugs I corl 'em.'

'But if the lady says no, what then?'

'Take no notice, er corse; jes worry 'er till she sez yers. Oh! I tell yer, fellers is fools, an' gells wot say they ain't er goin' ter marry is jes' pretendin'; like that there 'Ilda Smith—she never 'ad a feller, an' she wos goin' on seventeen, an' 'er muvver, she sed, my 'Ilda, she don't run after the boys—my 'Ilda, she's er *good gell*—my 'Ilda, she's er hangel!—oh! yers! we wasn't none uv us good enuff fer 'Ilda; bert Len Cullam 'e cum erlong; be mine, sez 'e; no, sez 'Ilda; I luv yer, sez 'e; rats! sez 'Ilda; I'll marry yer, sez 'e; jes try it on, sez 'Ilda; an' 'e corled round there every night, an' waited outside fer 'er every Sunday; an' er corse she 'ad 'im at last; you fellers is erfraid er women, that's wot it is.'

'Aunt Liza's ill.'

'Is she? What is it?'

'It's a boy this time.'

'Oh! . . . How many does that make?'

'Nine. Ain't goin' ter 'ave no more, she sez; lodgers is scarce down 'er street, an' yer can't keep kids on nuthin'.'

I approved Aunt Liza's decision and commiserated her condition.

'Oo, Arnt's orl right—she don't make no fuss; she orlwise sez when Muvver pities 'er, I ain't complainin' 'bout things—I'm jes' thankin' Gord I'm 'ere.'

'How is your mother?'

'Bin orful lately—it's gin, yer know; not bert wot gin's orl right—don't dislike it meself—bert gin on gin, an' then gin on the top er that—oh! it's orful! The Distric's goin' ter 'ave 'er taken away.'

'What will you do?'

'Oh! I'll go an' 'elp Arnt wiv the kids, jes' fer er time.'

'Wouldn't you rather go to school and be taught to be a lady?'

'No fear! I ain't goin' inter no 'ome fer orfens—sites! look at their 'ats, no fevvers ner nuthin'. Sides, goin' inter them places don't make yer er lady.'

'Really? What is a lady, then?'

'Why, one er them swells wot rides in the Park in kerridges, er corse; no corns on their trotters, they don't walk enuff—*an'* the 'ats!'

'You are quite wrong, Porl; a lady—'

'Yer needn't trouble ter spout—I've 'eard orl that before; it's like gettin' ter 'eaven—I'm sick uv it; an' wot's more, yer orl wrong, orl of yer—I *know*.'

. . . . .

'Ave yer 'eard 'bout Missis Barton's Roger? 'E's bin took up fer stealin'. The feller wot wos clearin' up the pub—it wos 'fore the barmaid come down—wos just at the back, an' Roger cleaned the till. Pore ole Roger, 'e blued the lot before 'e wos caught, which the judge sed gravitated the fence; though we didn't 'ear Roger mention no fence; bert 'e's got six months.—Come on, inter the Temple Garden.'

I followed Porl through the gate, and watched her dash off to join in a particularly spirited game just then in progress. I did not attempt to follow its intricacies, but lay on the grass and gave myself up to the peace of the place. Even the shouts of the children could not mar its restfulness. The Pegasus vane veered gently, the tired children flocked homewards, and the evening sky arched that perfect clearness discernible only when the sun sinks before an easterly wind.

The child joined me. 'Yer goin' up ter the Strand?'

'Yes.'

'I'll come too; I want ter go through the station.'

Charing Cross Station held special attraction for Porl. Possibly the air of cosmopolitanism, peculiar to all big railway stations, which balances quality of rank and nullifies distinction of race, relaxed with her, as with others, the blistering bands of an ignorance which starves on its desires and the futile fret of a resentment which cannot pay its debts. Charing Cross Bridge, too, she favoured in crossing the river, every local aspect of which (the only ones known to her) she loved, most particularly that from Waterloo Bridge looking east. 'Bert I orlwise like ter go 'ome over Charin', cos when yer standin' on the beastly thing yer can't see it'—a distinctly unconscious slaying of the dragon—'it's thet ugly, it spoils everything; it ort ter be pulled down. I like the trains, tho', an' the bumpy, bumpy feelin' when they go past—yer sort uv know sumthin's doin' sumthin', an' someone's gettin' somewhere, jus' when it's low tide, too, an' the boats er stuck in the mud. Orl the same, it ort ter be pulled down.'

III.

'Only the man who knows his needs,  
And fits his life to them, succeeds.'

'Wot's that—po'try?'

I came back to realities and Porl, slipped my book into my pocket, and smiled acquiescence.

'I knew a pote once—'e 'ad Arnt's back; 'e wasn't er bad sort—used ter give me pennies when 'e was sober; orlways told me, when yer grow up, not ter take ter bizness yer didn't know nuthin' erbout, jes' cos people told yer to; sed yer couldn't get on 'less yer 'ad—'ad—I ferget wot 'e corled it, but yer know wot I mean?'

'Propensity?'

'No, that wasn't it—wait er minnit—I got it—a "parng-sharnng." 'E learned me a pome once; shall I tell it yer?'

'Do.'

"It ain't no good er ferrittin' round  
Er thing yer know nuthin' erbout;  
Cos, while yer gropin', yer nose on the ground,  
The chap wot knows better goes past wiv er bound,  
An' 'fore yer say ginger, yer out."

'E learned me a lot more, bert I've ferget it.'

'What became of him?' I asked with interest.

'Oh! 'e went. Arnt corled 'im er diserpointed man, bert I guess Arnt was er bit diserpointed 'erself—'e owed 'er three months' rent, an' 'e broke two glasses while 'e was there an' 'e never sed nuthin' erbout it, bert when 'e'd gone, Arnt found the pieces. 'E was er funny chap, though, orlways torkin' erbout somethin' 'e corled opterminism. Yers, it's er big word, bert 'e torked erbout it sech er lot, I've never ferget it. 'E used ter say, coltivate it, Porl—coltivate it! it's better'n orl the grub; soon get fat on opterminism—look at me;—an' then 'e'd larf; 'e wosn't very fat—I s'pose that's why 'e larfed. I ast 'im wot coltivate meant, bert 'e only larfed ergen, an' sed, ast yer teacher, so I did, an' she gave us er lesson on it; it's wot they do to the flowers in the gardens—ever seen 'em?'

'Yes.'

'Yer know orl erbout it, then?'

'Yes.'

'I wonder where 'e went to?'

I also wondered.

'E 'ad an orful corf, pore chap; used ter joke erbout it an' corl it 'is corfin; then 'e'd say, good old optermism! good ole pal! an' then e'd go on jorin' erbout Phil-somethin' er other, ernuther pal uv 'is, I s'pose; 'e wos er funny chap, straight; 'e'd got er dog—it wouldn't look at anybody bert 'im, an' yer couldn't go in 'is room if 'e wos out—the tyke wouldn't let yer. I got er book uv 'is at 'ome, 'e'd wrote it 'isself; I'll give it yer some day.'

The lazy influence of summer was in the air; action needed effort; in a state of dreamy quiescence I watched the drifting barges until an aggressive steam-tug changed the gentle slap-slap of the water into the swish and gurgle of a surface swell. I turned Westminsterwards regretfully, and met Porl suddenly.

I saw with amazement that the child was crying. Porl in tears!—surely a tragedy? After some entreaty, I elicited through snivelling sobs, 'E sed I'd better grease my face, it ud slide away more easier then.'

Could this be Porl, the champion hitter-back, the embodied Bravado, who ever cloaked defence with defiance?

'E sed no one 'ud ever 'ave me; I wasn't like other girls.'

After a violent assault on her nose, 'I *can't* 'elp it, I *do* try—it ain't no good.'

I comforted the child with assurance that the boy was wrong; that she was like others; she was not, but I knew that time would easily arrange the matter.

Poverty of circumstance, meagreness of condition, accident of sex, barrenness of education, each help to sink individuality of either temperament or intellect. In temperament the chance is small, whatever the class; individuality inevitably silts away at the touch of social necessity. In intellect the rich may descend, the poor must. Board Schools! yes; but Board Schools stuff the mass, they do not feed the individual. 'The greatest good to the greatest number,' truly, right and just; yet, though createdly wise, creatively, 'tis a pity.

Porl was easily comforted; she joined a gang of youngsters journeying parkwards, her equilibrium quite restored.

'I'll punch young Bob's 'ead when I catch 'im—beast!'

Her next remark escaped me, it being complicated between the



indignation of two bus-drivers, a chauffeur, and a cabby, whose volubility was echoed in the reproach of the policeman that conducted the traffic. But I heard, yelled at me from the oasis of the timid in the middle of the road, 'Let 'em jes' wait till I git my 'at—I'll show 'em.

IV.

'It would have been my pleasure, had I seen,  
We needs must love the highest when we see it.'

One Sunday afternoon I came across Porl in her favourite haunt, just by the Obelisk on the Thames Embankment. Her face looked pale and pinched, her ears, in contrast, larger than usual. She was kicking disconsolately at the dead leaves on the pavement, and I had to speak twice before she noticed me at all. She was absorbed in contemplation of something or somebody without my range of vision. Turning sharply at my second address, she remarked abruptly, 'That's Loo; she's got 'er new 'at; ain't she orl there, *my* word!'

As was her custom when we met, she made my direction hers. We went together into the Abbey, and sat facing the window which crowns the Poets' Corner; Porl stared at it the whole time we were there. On our entry she had displayed a keen interest in the statues and effigies, but once the window arrested her fancy, her attention was monopolised.

When we came out the glint in her eyes was more pronounced than ever, her tongue unusually inactive. Had the music impressed her? or, I doubted, could it be the sermon?

We parted on almost the same spot, where in the afternoon we had met; just beyond the bridge she caught up with me.

'I'm goin' ter 'eaven,' breathlessly.

I smiled. Porl was nothing if not decisive.

'I didn't know, yer know,' half-shamefacedly; 'I never see it before. Pity when it got black,' rather wistfully; 'gits dark there same as 'ere, then?'

It was unsavoury work explaining to Porl that the setting of the earthly sun had darkened her heaven, and that that heaven was only coloured glass. But I need not have dreaded the result; Porl knew best—she didn't believe me. And I carried home with me, to the exclusion of anthems and sermons, the glint of the eyes which defied logic and saw heaven, even through denial.

Oddly enough, I could not again persuade the child to the Abbey. 'No; things is never the same twice, I'd rather not come; it's jes' like torkin' 'bout things—drekly yer bergin ter spout, *then* they go. I 'ad an ice-cream las' summer—Bob Lee treated me—an' I got jorin' ter Annie Wynne, an' it orl dropped through my fingers. Then I wos ter 'ave gone wiv the Treat, an' I got gabbin' erbout 'ow I'd done teacher, stayin' erway an' pretendin' I 'adn't, an' she 'eard me, an' looked up the retchister, an' wouldn't let me go. I paid 'er out, though—stuck two bits uv toffy I'd bin suckin' on to 'er chair; she sat on 'em right 'nuff, old cat! Young Meg Fears told 'er it wos me, 'bert I didn't care. They went ter Southend, *ole day by the sea!*'

## V.

'Oh! blessèd human Sympathy,  
Thou keystone to Eternity.'

The jingle of the Embankment, the rattle of Waterloo Bridge, the low roar of the trains, and the sucking swirl of the river, combined to one dull ache. Humanity seemed embodied in the dumb indifference of the Sphinxes behind me.

At last the November twilight merged into the Thames and I turned to the child whose brief 'Ullo' had but half penetrated my consciousness some time before.

'Well, Porl?'

'Someone's bin 'urtin' yer.'

Denial was useless in the face of Porl's assertive queries.

'I know—I orlways come 'ere when I'm wild—she wouldn't 'ave yer.'

I noted the intuition of sex.

'Wot er donkey.'

'Porl!'

'Huh!'

'I haven't enough money.'

'She *is* er donkey; wot's the good er money?'

'Money,' I began pedantically—but the glint in Porl's eyes checked the cant upon my lips; I clinked the coins in my pocket and finished lamely, 'er—is what makes people happy.'

'Is it?' derisively; 'you ain't 'appy, any'ow. Look at yer face.'

'A physical impossibility, little one.'

'Huh!'

I drooped an arm round the child's shoulders and together we stared into the water. Its heavy oiliness weighed on me, but Porl preferred it that way. 'Don't look so 'ungry like; ef it was orl clear ter the bottom yer'd want ter drop in.'

'Ere's Wally. 'Ullo, Wal.'

'Ullo.'

'Ow's yer wooden leg?'—a solicitude which roused Wally's crutch to antagonism.

I returned the boy's cheerful greeting. He was one of poverty's brightest specimens—on Saturdays and other school holidays generally to be found playing in the Park. His expression was cheeky, his laugh merry; life struck him as a jolly affair. His one-leggedness he took as a joke; it was awkward, of course, but a chap could have such fun shovelling dead leaves into heaps with the top end of a crutch; other chaps had to sneak bits of board and all sorts; and then, see how handy it was as a weapon—the only one, I verily believe, that Porl feared—as she expressed it, 'Give me fists; I ain't no 'and wiv the clubs.'

To Porl the crippledom was tragedy; she resented it as rank injustice on the part of Providence, and the boy's cheerful acceptance of fate but made her the more resentful.

'Getting on well at school, Wally?'

'Think so, sir, got er stiffkit fer 'tendance.'

'That's right.'

'Time you was 'ome.'

'Go 'ome yerself.'

'I'm er goin', come on.' Then to me, 'Don't worry yerself no more; 'ave er good supper; *she* ain't no clars—money!—huh!'

## VI.

'Is human love the growth of human will?'

Porl got a 'plaice,' and was submerged for a period under the drudgery of some lodging-house where the maid-of-all-work slept in. I felt the want of her badly at first, but necessity begets acquiescence, and though indifference cannot be cultivated, endurance can. She was grown up when I met her again, strolling along the Garden side of the Embankment, a very much

befeathered hat on her head, and a coarse-looking, muffled youth on her arm. Her hair was arranged to conceal as much as possible those abnormal ears; the face was older, the eyes were as young as ever.

She dismissed her companion directly she saw me, and greeted me with eager warmth.

'Ullo!—ain't seen yer fer years—yer got fatter. Wot d'yer think er me?—paid fer the 'at orl bert four bob. That's my feller'—in a more subdued tone, with a suggestion of shyness—'wot d'yer think uv 'im?'

I smiled a non-committal smile.

'Loo sez 'e ain't clars, bert Loo's green.'

I laughed.

'We're goin' ter be married er Monday—comin'?''

'Rather—what is the gentleman, Porl?'

'Ai?'

'What are your sweetheart's prospects?'

'Is prospex?—oh! 'is job; 'e's out er one jest now, bert I'm at the ironing, yer know.'

Perhaps I looked grave. Porl grew resentful.

'Er corse 'e's out; ain't everybody out? There's 'undreds er decent chaps on the same bus. Dunno wot the country's comin' to. My Ted sez wot we want is ter muzzle the Commons an' ter shove both blinkers on the Lords; tho' I don't berlieve in 'bolishing the Pots meself—they've got more sense than the others; bert Ted sez 'e don't know what the use uv any of 'em is—'e jest blasts the lot,' e does. 'E's sure ter get something soon, an' I tell yer, I'm at the ironing, so it's orl right.'

'Won't it be wiser to wait till he does get something to do?'

'I've promised.'

'But suppose you're ill?'

'E wants me ter marry 'im er Monday—I've promised.'

Porl's unlost propensity for clinching an argument with an absolutely conclusive yet unconvincing remark flooded me.

'Do you love him, Porl?'

She turned to the river.

I waited.

'Yers—I dunno—oh yers, I do, though—bert I didn't want—yer see, I 'ad to.'

Liverpool—Birmingham—thence to Crewe; from Crewe I wrote to Porl of my happiness; early in July I called on her in London. She received me with unaffected delight, and pressed me to stay to tea.

'Let's 'ave a good tork. 'Ow yer bin gittin' on?'

'Never mind me: what about you?'

'I'm orl right.'

I doubted it.

'And the baby?'

'She cries er good deal, bert babies gen'rally do grizzle er bit—there she is—an' the kettle's boilin' too.'

While Porl tended the child I pondered the mother. She smiled less with her eyes and more with her mouth than she had been wont to do, and the pinched expression of childhood had returned to her face. She passed the sugar, shifted the baby from one arm to the other, and glanced to see that the water still boiled.

'Don't look so 'umpy as yer used.'

'No?'

'Everything's er long time comin', but yer gits it some time. Remember ole Fred?'

'Yes.'

'E was took, back in the spring.'

I expressed my regret.

'Yers, 'is taters was the best round 'ere. Some other feller's got the stall now, real lamps an' all; 'e takes er good bit, I've 'eard. Don't buy 'em myself—couldn't fancy 'em without ole Fred.'

'Was he long ill?'

'No, on'y er week. 'E 'ad er good bit saved; sech er *grand* funeral; there was two pounds over, so they giv' er sort er supper—we orl went. 'E 'adn't no one belongin' to 'im, yer know, so there wasn't no claims. 'Arry Stone was there that night; it *was* er slap-up erfair—no four-arf, real Bass—mine an' im 'ad a bit uv er spiff.'

'What about?'

'Oh! mine's er bit jealous when 'e's drunk, an' 'Arry, yer know—'

'Well?'

'Oh! I ain't er goin' ter let on.'

'They haven't pulled Charing Cross Bridge down yet?'

'No, the mugs! run trams round the Embankment instead! must er wanted er job—rot, I corl it! might er let the Embankment

erlone—be running 'em through the Parks next! Did yer see wot some swell put in the paper erbout it? Sez 'e, "Wot's orl the fuss erbout? 'Oo uses the Embankment?"—'Oo uses the Embankment! Let im' come up this street, I'll show 'im 'oo uses the Embankment! 'Ow erbout the poor devils that sleep there? S'pose there rest's ter be broke be er beastly clang-clang in their ear'-oles? 'Sides, 'ow long will trams satisfy 'em? They'll be wantin' motor buses in er year, an' the Lord on'y knows what after thet. Oh! I've no patience'—as I tried to interpose—'it's er lot er rot. The road's orlways bein' mended; be worse than ever now. They're er lot er muckers, that's wot they are. Nice old frost that steam-boat game—there wos ernother muck for yer!'

'Of course you use the trams, Porl?'

'Not me; they're cheap an' 'andy, bert I'm not so fed up as ter want 'em rand the Embankment.'

'How is Loo?'

'She's married—did yer know?—but uv corse yer didn't. Oh! she's—but 'ere comes Ted—well! it's bin quite er treat ter see yer—don't want ter 'urrying off, but must git 'is tea, yer know.'

'Good-bye, Porl. I hope baby will get on all right.'

'Yers'—with a dubious frown—'she'll do. I wish it wasn't er gell, though.'

The husband passed me in the passage. He saluted his wife with a muttered curse: 'Stow that kid—I want some grub!'

## VII.

'She felt how cold is God,  
How brief our breath,  
How vain is any love,  
How strong is death.'

Porl's baby was ill. The mother's stoical indifference surprised me. She tended the child with the devotion which ignorance usually bestows on its young, yet she showed no anxiety that the little one should live.

I gained the clue to her attitude one evening when I ran against her at the top of the court. The baby, rolled in an old shawl, was wailing piteously. Porl's expression was strained, and the hand she gave me trembled.

'I'm jest goin' round ter Loo's.'

'Are you? I'll walk that way. How is baby?'

'Ill. Doctor sez she's bein' starved. I'm ter bring 'er up by 'and; rather er good job; I can go back ter the ironing ergen; Loo'll mind 'er while I'm out.'

The night air hung dank and heavy from recent rain, and, though the month was August, autumn lurked at the street corners.

I suggested the inadvisability of the child being out of her bed. 'I'm goin' ter sleep at Loo's ter-night.'

Silence marked the rest of our walk; the baby stopped crying, and when we shook hands at parting, Porl had ceased to tremble.

Our eyes met—hers blazed into mine—'If he touches the kid ergen, I'll *kill* him!'

. . . . .

A fortnight later I met Porl returning from the ironing.

'Baby's gone.'

She spoke with a dull apathy, and my sympathy met with no response.

Later the tears came.

'Pore kid—never uv bin strong, the doctor sez. Sides—she wos er gell!'

# VIII.

'It isn't the fact that you're licked that counts,  
It's—how did you fight—and why?'

'Come in, sir—she's bin asking for yer.'

'How did it happen?'

'She fell downstairs—must 'ave slipped—ain't no 'ope, they say.'

'Does she know?'

'Don't seem ter care.'

I met the doctor on the stairs.

'She can't last the night—she's a brave girl—you're her friend?'

'Yes.'

'Stay with her if you can. I am sending for Mrs. Carthall.'

I remembered—Loo.

'How did it happen?—do you know?'

'*She says* she fell downstairs; swears there was no one with



her—but the thing looks fishy. I've a strong suspicion the husband's a brute. I've seen some unaccountable bruises on her body more than once, and the night the child was born the drunken beast—but there, it's no use talking about what you can't prove. Bye-bye.'

The busy doctor hurried off. I opened the door gently. Porl heard me, and greeted me excitedly.

'Ere yer are—thort yer was never comin'.'

My answer choked in my throat.

'Don't take on—I ain't troublin'. Remember once one Sunday yer took me ter the Abbey, an' I thort it was 'eaven? Well, I *was* right—saw it jest now as plain as plain, an' one uv them sort er winder things was open, an' the kid was lookin' through—as plain as plain.'

. . . . .  
'I'm glad it died—I'd rather rear it meself—it's er bit rough on gells down 'ere.'

. . . . .  
I wiped the cold sweat from her forehead.

'Pain bad, Porl?'

'No—I feel orful sick, though.'

I held water to her lips.

'Thanks. Don't look so worried—it ain't so bad—soon be over, Doctor sez.'

. . . . .  
I watched the grey shadow steal over the tired face. Presently the eyes glinted at me with some faint revival of their youth, and the fingers closed round mine.

'*She'll* be orl right—yer different ter 'im.'

. . . . .  
The end came slowly.

Porl had not spoken for some hours. Her eyes searched my face now and then with a dumb-animal question in them; for the rest they stared steadily at the window.

We said no prayers.

We regretted no sins.

I held her hand closely in mine, and the dying flesh seemed to find comfort in the contact with the living.

About five o'clock she tried to speak.

. . . . .

Loo came just as the milkman was starting his rounds; we heard the rattle of his cans and his reverberating 'Milk-oo-oo!' as he passed the top of the court.

Then we drew the sheet over the baffled clay and closed the door on the checkmate of mortality.

*A PEACEFUL NIGHT.*

BY FREDERICK MARTIN.

FOR many months his lodging had been in one of the meaner streets of a mean city. The street was noisy and odorous. When the opportunity presented itself of a run into the country for a couple of days he welcomed it eagerly. He was fastidious and given to introspection, and he felt that his sordid environment had been fraying his nerves. Through the day his work absorbed him, but the nights in the mean city were distressing. There was no peace except during the brief hours between the last yells of the most belated citizens of the quarter, and the howling of hooters and the clatter of clogs, melancholy heralds of another dismal day. The two genteel young lady shop assistants who inhabited the rooms next to his had recently acquired a gramophone. Their musical taste lay in the direction of the more vigorous contemporary masters of syncopation, and they were wont to indulge in early morning recitals, in addition to late nightly performances. He had made no complaint, for he was of a tolerant nature and entertained a certain belief in the refining influence of music. All the same the genteel young ladies in the present stage of their progress towards culture were a little trying. Up to date he had not suffered from insomnia; he had managed his eight hours a night of tolerably sound sleep, yet there was something lacking. Something which could not be obtained in the mean street, the peaceful quiet which, as he felt, could alone give real refreshment to mind and body. This peace and quiet he would find in the country. He would spend a couple of nights in the sweet, pure air amid the silence of the fields and woods, and he would return to work like a giant refreshed. Down in the country there would be no depressing, smoke-spouting factories, no howling hooters, clattering clogs, screeching gramophones, wailing children, bawling men. He would get himself thoroughly tired by a long tramp from the railway to the house set on a hill. Perhaps, if he was lucky, he might catch a trout or two in the late evening, and then he would sleep. That was to be the climax, the perfect sleep in perfect peace and quiet. He knew the room

he should have, and already he could feel the caress of the cool, pleasant sheets, sheets that had been smiled on by a kindly sun and kissed by fragrant breezes.

He must take full advantage of his salubrious holiday ; it must be an orgy of fresh air. To that end he would leave his cigarette case behind. A clean briar pipe was the only engine of nicotine appropriate to the open-air setting. At the railway station bookstall he went back on this decision. He bought a box of fifty, 'in case of accidents.' He slipped the box into the pocket of the rainproof coat hanging on his arm, with an elaborate air of unconcern, as if the cigarettes had no interest for him and the coat belonged to another. He was quite conscious that he was endeavouring to deceive himself ; indeed the act of slipping the box into the pocket recalled to him the description of Mr. Pecksniff drawing off his gloves and warming his hands before the fire, as benevolently as if they were somebody else's, not his.

In the matter of weather his luck was in, and he had a famous tramp by moors and field paths to the house set on a hill. He drank the fresh air in long draughts, and ever and anon he luxuriated in the thought of the night that lay ahead. Through his head ran all the lines he had ever known in which poets had celebrated the silence and the beauty and the peace of night. At a wayside inn he lunched on bread and cheese and beer. Then, seated on a bench out in the open, he had more beer while he smoked his clean briar pipe. By this time the mean street and the mean town had faded from his thoughts. He gave himself up to contemplation of the pleasant present and to a vision of the still more pleasant future. All the time there was somewhere within him a sensation which reminded him of schooldays when the holidays were near at hand, a sensation as of a song singing itself, or of a tiny well-balanced wheel revolving swiftly and happily. Whenever his thoughts wandered they were summoned back at intervals by this queer sensation, and he knew that its cause was the prospect of the peaceful night. It was, so to say, the motif running through the symphony of his thoughts. Five miles more along the sunny lanes would bring him to the house on a hill, and he had a very accurate conception of what would happen at the end of his journey. His host and hostess were people who knew how to make a guest thoroughly comfortable. There would be no fuss on his arrival. He would get there at tea-time, and even so soon after lunch as this was, a vision of the

tea-table in the sunlit drawing-room was attractive, such a contrast to the dingy appurtenances of the refreshment shops of the mean city. There would be pleasant conversation, having no reference at all to the sordid affairs of business; it would be light and airy as befitting the scene. There are some hostesses who know the perfect way in which to receive a man at the end of a long day's tramp. They do not worry him by excessive attentions. They do not offer to brush his clothes or to suggest an immediate bath and complete change. They receive a tired and hungry man in the simplest possible fashion, conduct him to a comfortable chair, and give him fragrant tea and pleasant things to eat. They know that the moment at which such a man desires not to be bothered is exactly this very moment. After tea he would smoke a pipe with his host, and later on he would luxuriate in hot water, and, as the novelists say, 'remove the stains of travel from his person and his costume.' They dined early at the house set on a hill, and after that he would try for a trout. Then there would be time for another pipe and a chat, and so to bed, the fitting climax to this perfect day.

It all fell out as he had foreseen. It was even better than he had thought. In the room allotted to him he found that his lightest wish had been anticipated. It was spacious and lofty, and was empty of all but the essential furniture. An ample window, looking to the south-east, commanded a view of the tree-studded lawn, on which an old and wise-looking sheep was grazing peacefully. This, by the way, was an ancient house, but its windows were modern; that is to say, they were designed to admit the light and the fresh air. At the moment they were wide open and the room was filled with the fragrance from the garden. Tea and bath and dinner, the short excursion to the trout stream, the last pipe, and the last chat, all went off as per programme, and it was with a light heart and a light step that he made his way upstairs. He gazed out upon the moonlit lawn; everything was very still and there was no wind. As he stood by the window he heard a dog bark in the distance. It was, he thought, a pleasant, friendly sound. Surely it came from a dog that had had a good day in the country; a loyal, companionable dog, wise in the lore of the fields and the woods, a faithful ally of some good fellow, a stalwart keeper or a jovial farmer. 'Good dog,' he murmured, and then he got to bed. He was thoroughly tired, the bed was completely comfortable, and the silence and the air gave

him a kind of ecstasy. Everything was happening exactly as he had wished it. How lucky were the folk who could dwell in the country! . . . No sooner was he asleep than he fell in with the friendly dog. Along a field path they were walking, in such a fashion that his left hand rested on the dog's head. To fall in with the friendly dog in this way gratified but did not surprise him. He knew the dog quite well. It was a big, handsome, dignified dog, a Du Maurier dog, an aristocrat of dogs, majesty and gentleness in its bearing. He knew the dog and he knew its name, though, for some queer reason, he could not recall it. The name consisted of a word which he had striven to remember all the evening, a word which applied to the scenes and the circumstances of the day and the evening and the night. It eluded him. Every now and then as they walked along he would pat the dog's noble head and would murmur a caressing word, and the dog would reply with a friendly bark which sounded as from afar off, mellow and musical. It occurred to him that it might be the best thing to ask the dog to tell him its name. He did this somewhat apologetically, as one does when such a question has to be put, because one has stupidly forgotten something for forgetting which there is no excuse. To his relief the dog was not at all offended. It is only small and touchy people who take offence at such things. The great dog was quite pleasant about it. 'Tranquil,' it answered. 'Tranquil,' of course he remembered perfectly now. That was the word, a good word and very expressive. It fitted the hour and the scene and the mood, and it became the noble dog absolutely. 'Good old Tranquil,' he murmured, and the dog answered with his friendly far-away bark. Without warning the field path disappeared, and he found himself hurrying along a miserable alley, hurrying as fast as his heavy feet would let him, hurrying slowly away from something horrible which was about to happen. The dog had gone; perhaps it was just as well, for there would have been no room for it to walk alongside him in this narrow alley, and there was no room behind him, for the houses closed in in his rear, so that he could not have turned even if he had wanted to. The something horrible was imminent. It happened. There crashed upon his ears and thrilled through his being a horrible, blood-curdling sound. It was like the agonised howl of some creature in mortal pain and fear. He tried to run, but now something held him back, and his feet were heavier than ever. The sound came again, as horrible as ever, but there was a change.

The tone was menacing this time, ominous, the voice of a horrible fate pursuing him. Once more it rent the air. He sat up in bed, waking rapidly. The room was still, the moon was shining peacefully. But there came to his ears the sound of a ghostly swish in the grass outside; he felt his scalp creeping ever so slightly, and there was a clammy feeling between his shoulders. Once more came the noise. He jumped out of bed with a little laugh of self-contempt, and looked out at the open window. He rattled the window in its sash. The old sheep on the lawn looked up at him, shook its wise head, gave forth once again a throaty, vibrating, baritone bray, and walked off in a leisurely progress to the shrubbery on the hither side of the lawn.

Thoroughly ashamed of himself, he scrambled into bed again. For a long time he courted sleep determinedly and in vain. That disgusting old sheep had broken the charms of the country night. His friend the distant dog still bayed the moon. He felt his sentiments toward it changing. After all, what on earth did the beastly animal want to howl all night for? The man who owned it must be either a sot who drank himself into a stupor, rendering himself oblivious of all sound, or he was a hard-bitten, soulless fellow with no nerves of his own and no consideration for the comfort of his neighbours. It really was a scandal that any man should be suffered to keep a brute of a dog that made the night hideous with this insane clamour. Now that he came to think of it, there was nothing friendly in the sound. There was neither rhyme nor reason about it, and its lack of ascertainable rhythm was maddening. 'Wowf, wowf, wowf! . . . Wowf, wowf, wowf, wowf! . . . Wowf, wowf, wowf, wowf, wowf! . . . Wowf! . . . Wowf, wowf!' Confound it! would it never stop? If only the beast would adopt some definite measure of syllables a man might regard it as a lullaby; this delirious syn-copation, this senseless mixture of metres was distracting. Besides, there was no intelligence in the tone. What did it remind him of? Yes! of course! it was like the sound made by an asthmatic gas engine, surely one of the most fatuous, vapid, futile of noises. It was like the cough of a man who had lost his backbone, a hollow cough proceeding from nowhere, invertebrate, irritating, imbecile. It was the sort of cough you might expect to hear from a lunatic ghost suffering from consumption. What a fearsome idea, a lunatic ghost with a consumptive cough. Were such an unwholesome wretch to cross his path he felt certain he



would shriek with terror. Shriek! What in the name of all the Furies was this next? Once more his nerves jangled him into wakefulness. This time it was a screech owl. Good Lord! what a night of beastly noises. The moon was gone. It was dark; a cold breeze was moaning into the room. The hour before the dawn.

There was no doubt about it this time, he was thoroughly and irredeemably awake; his nerves were on edge. The inevitable specific—a cigarette: where was the fifty box? He remembered. He had omitted to remove it from the pocket of his raincoat, and the coat was hanging in the hall downstairs. Could he venture the journey? It was odds that he would stumble against something that would fall with horrid clatter and waken the whole house. Such a risk was not to be thought of. Besides, to profane this sweet room with tobacco smoke was unthinkable; no decent man could think of sullyng purity so defenceless. Still, a whiff or two would be very comforting and he might get to sleep. After all he could lean from the window and blow the smoke out into the night. The door of his room creaked as he opened it cautiously and slowly. Every step of the stair protested audibly. As he reached the hall, he banged his shoulder against something hard and sharp. There was a grinding of wheels, quite a raucous sound, and then stridently the grandfather clock proclaimed the hour of four. He was not prone to the use of free language, but he cursed the clock fervently though quietly as he crept past it and reached the coat rack against which he merely barked a shin. There was no unfortunate incident on the return journey, except that the night breeze took charge of his bedroom door, and wresting it from his nerveless grasp closed it with a bang. He jumped into bed, prepared to offer an avowal of complete ignorance should his host, awakened by the crash, enter and demand explanations. All was still. Now he was quite reckless of the atmosphere, and he smoked. Indeed a cigarette was most soothing; he had a second and a third, and now he noticed that the eastern sky was growing light. He really must get some sleep. Once more he arose, this time to throw his cigarette ends into the rose tree clustering around his window. As he did so, there came from the tree on the lawn a faint chirp. That, he thought, is a really rural, a thoroughly poetic and satisfactory sound. 'The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds,' he quoted. Then lying down for the hundredth time as it seemed, he smilingly recalled the story of how Tennyson had been mortally offended by the punster, who, meeting him in his garden

while he was enjoying his after-breakfast smoke, had altered the last word of the line to 'bards.' Not a bad pun, he reckoned; but really it was time to sleep. The first chirp was followed by another and another, and then in a moment the whole tree burst forth into song. All the birds in the country seemed to have arrived and to be tuning up for a vocal competition, each artist practising his own scales with the utmost vigour and with absolute disregard of the efforts of his neighbour. This was really too bad, and he felt sympathetic towards the Cockney Town Clerk who confided to the Royal Commission that he had once spent a week in the country and had never got a wink of sleep for the blooming birds. Piercing through the medley of chirps and twitters and whistles came the clarion call of the farmyard cock, repeated at intervals of a few seconds and awakening antiphonal responses from distant dunghills. And now the sun was coming up, and its rays seemed concentrated on his pillow. He was getting a wink of sleep now and again, when a bee entered the room with the fuss of an important and corpulent personage arriving late on a platform of a public meeting. 'Drat the busy little bee,' he thought—'and also Dr. Watts,' he added spitefully.

'Bang, bang.' No sound of nature this time. He swam out of the waters of a deep sleep. 'Hullo, old chap,' came a disgustingly cheery voice from the lawn. 'Eight o'clock, and a fine fresh morning.' He tried hard to smile as he looked out to his host, who was standing on the lawn, a gun under his arm and the corpse of a newly murdered rabbit dangling from his left hand.

'Hope I didn't startle you out of your beauty sleep,' sang the sportsman. 'These bally rabbits have nearly done in our vegetables, and you must shoot 'em when you get the chance. Had a good night?'

'Splendid,' came the lying yawn.

'That's good. Breakfast in half an hour. If you are late there'll be nothing left. I've been all round the place for a couple of hours, and I'm as hungry as a bear.'

Contemptuously he noted that the stupid bee, or another equally stupid, was still vainly buzzing against the window pane, wearing itself to death in a hopeless struggle to regain the outer air. Idly he flicked at the insect with his handkerchief, with the notion of guiding it toward the way to freedom. With disconcerting suddenness the bee broke back. It came off the pane with the destroying swiftness of the best Gregorian ball, and it

caught him in the neck and stung, just under the Adam's apple. 'Exactly where the collar stud presses,' he reflected grimly at a later stage of his toilet.

He could not face another such night, so he furbished up an excuse and departed for the mean street in the mean city.

'I 'ope you've had a refreshin' holiday, sir,' said his landlady.

'Very refreshing, thank you, Mrs. Wottle,' he answered. 'And I mean to keep up the salubrious habit I have acquired in the country and go to bed early.'

'That's right, sir. I hope the young ladies' music will not disturb you.'

As she spoke the gramophone opened fire. It sizzled and crackled and shrieked.

'Not a bit. I can sleep through anything. What is the name of that tune, do you know?'

'That's the new record the young ladies got yesterday from Miss Simkin's young gentleman. He's very fond of music and goes to all the concerts.'

'Very nice,' he rejoined. 'And what is the name of the tune?'

'It's called "Devilled Kidneys," I believe, sir.'

'A beautiful name for a beautiful air. Thank you, Mrs. Wottle. Good-night.'

As he got to bed the gramophone was still busy. 'Devilled Kidneys,' he murmured. 'What a sweet name. And what a jolly comfortable place is one's own bed. The country is all very well in its way, but——'

## SNAKE-CHARMERS.

ON reading an article recently on the catching of snakes, I was reminded of an experience I had many years ago when camping in Southern India. I was at the time very sceptical about the powers of snake-charmers, especially as regards the catching of wild snakes. On more than one occasion I had seen them at work in gardens, and I was never convinced that the snakes caught by them were genuine wild ones : in fact, there were always good reasons to suppose that the snakes had been either previously 'put down' or else cleverly produced from the persons of the snake-charmers.

The experience of which I now write, however, was a very different matter, and convinced me that though ninety-nine out of a hundred so-called snake-charmers may be frauds, the hundredth may be absolutely genuine and possess the power of attracting snakes.

As usual, the majority of my servants and camp equipment had gone on the day before I left my headquarters, and orders were given to pitch the tents in a new locality about a mile distant from the place which had hitherto been my camping-ground. This new ground was situated on a low, rocky ridge about a mile long, covered with scrub jungle and stunted trees, which formed the greater portion of the *bund* or embankment of a large irrigation tank (reservoir). Extensive repairs and extensions were being made to the two surplus water escapes at the flanks of the tank, and by pitching my camp on the rocky ridge between them, it was easy for me to get at them both, and inspect the work that was being done.

Having made an early start from my headquarters, I rode into my camp about 9 A.M. I saw at once that something was amiss. The servants were all gathered round an old stunted tree, talking and shouting, and obviously very excited. I called up my head 'boy' and asked him what the trouble was, when he informed me that 'a very big size cobra snake' had slipped out from inside my tent when he was arranging it against my arrival, and that on chasing it, it had escaped into a hollow in the trunk of the tree. They had tried all ways they could think of to get it out, including shoving a long bamboo into the hollow and rattling it about, but without success, and they were then engaged in

trying to smoke it out. This last experiment was tried to such an extent and so vigorously, that eventually there was danger of the jungle around being set ablaze, so I had to put a stop to it. My own private opinion was that either the snake had not been carefully marked down, or else it had made its escape prior to my arrival.

After a refreshing bath I had a late breakfast, and then sat down to do some office work. The tree into which the snake was said to have gone was less than 20 yards distant from my tent, and was clearly visible from where I sat, through the tent window—anyone going near it would have come across my line of vision; anyhow, I am convinced in my own mind that no one did go near it. The nearest big village to my camp was about two miles away, and to this my cook had gone after breakfast to get supplies.

Evidently he must have talked of the 'very big size cobra snake,' as shortly after his return two snake-charmers, with all the usual paraphernalia—baskets with snakes, blankets, pipes, etc.—turned up and greeted me with the usual drawling 'Salaam, Sahib.' Even in the south of India, where Hindustani is very little spoken, the snake-charmers and conjurors use this language more than Tamil and Telugu. I asked them what they wanted, and they said they had heard in the village that a very big cobra had been seen in my encampment, 'over 6 ft. long,' and they had come to try to catch it, if I would give them permission to do so, as they had not got a really big cobra in their collection. I told them to go ahead at once, and myself went out to watch the proceedings. The men proceeded to walk round and round the tree, one of them playing the weird snake-charmers' pipes. My servants were required to stand well back, and I myself remained about 10 yards from the tree.

In about three minutes both men suddenly came to a halt, but the music continued; then the one who was not playing advanced very cautiously and quietly with a blanket, and about the same time I saw a snake moving out of the hole at the bottom of the tree. After what seemed quite a long time, but was probably only a few seconds, the blanket was thrown on to the snake, and the man who threw it followed it up like a flash. In another second he had run his left hand up to just below the snake's neck and held it quite securely, while it twisted and lashed itself round his arm. The reptile was obviously furious, and was struggling and hissing in a most alarming manner; the fangs were quite visible, which went to confirm that it really was a wild

snake just caught for the first time. As it was not killed I did not actually measure it, but the men said it was a very large one, and it certainly looked every bit of 5 foot, which is very big for a cobra. In spite of having seen this snake caught before my eyes, I still thought that there might have been some trickery about it, and that by some means unknown to me it had been 'introduced' by the snake men. I proceeded to voice my doubts to them, whereupon they laughed and said that I had chosen as a camping-ground a place which, from the look of it, must be infested with snakes, and they felt sure they could catch one or more in any part of the rocky ridge I might choose to take them to. I promptly challenged them to do so, but to make sure that they took no snakes with them, I insisted on their stripping themselves of all clothing, except the minutest of loin cloths.

One of the men was allowed to carry a basket for the snakes and a small blanket, which I examined before starting, and the other carried the musical instrument. After proceeding about a quarter of a mile, I stopped at a likely-looking place and told them to produce a snake. They commenced as they had done before, moving slowly forward and very much on the alert, the pipes being played quietly all the time. In a few minutes both came to a standstill, and the next moment the blanket was cast and another cobra—a much smaller one this time—was brought to bag. I told them to kill it, which they refused to do, as they said it was wrong to kill the 'nalla pambu' (cobra), but they had no objection to my doing so. The Tamil name for cobra, 'nalla pambu,' means 'good snake,' and the name is evidently a propitiatory one. A second place was tried a few hundred yards further on, where in a very short time two cobras were caught in the same manner, both under 4 ft. long.

A third place was much more open and less rocky, and before commencing operations the men said it was not likely that a snake would be there. They were quite correct, and after trying for five minutes we moved on to the end of the ridge, where another cobra was bagged. I was then quite convinced that these men were genuine snake-catchers and had the power of attracting snakes to them. It was after getting back to my camp, however, that to me the most interesting part of the day's performance commenced. The snake-charmers removed the big cobra that had been caught first from the basket, and one of them proceeded to 'play' with it. The 'play' consisted in persistently annoying it by hitting it on the head, pulling its tail, etc., till the poor

creature, raised to a pitch of intense fury, struck at its tormentor repeatedly. He, however, was protected by the instrument he used, a bulb or gourd about 4 inches in diameter, with a short stick passed through it projecting from each end. By holding one of the handles so formed his hand was completely guarded, and all the snake could do was to strike the bulb.

Now came the wonderful part of the performance. The man produced an old piece of root from his bag. He said this was a cure for snake bite, but it had to be used immediately: a decoction from the root had to be taken internally and powder from it rubbed into the bite after the latter had been enlarged and the flesh cut deep into with a razor or knife. I asked him if he would let the snake bite him and try the remedy, but he very naïvely replied that it would be foolish to be bitten unnecessarily, as in some cases the medicine might not be effective. He proceeded, however, to demonstrate the fear or dislike the cobra had for this root. After working it up to a state of intense fury with the bulb stick, he would suddenly strike at the snake with his other hand, holding a piece of the root in his fingers. It looked a mad thing to do, as the hand was quite unprotected; but instead of the snake striking at him, it immediately dropped its head on to the ground and tried to make off, only to be ruthlessly pulled back by its tail. Time and again this was repeated, the snake each time being thoroughly excited by means of the bulb stick before the root was produced, and each time the same thing happened. It was an amazing performance. The men then begged me to try for myself the effect of the root on the cobra, and said they would stand guarantee that nothing happened to me; but I was not to be induced. I pointed out to them that their guarantee would be of little use to me if the snake did bite me, especially after their remark that 'it would be foolish to be bitten unnecessarily, as in some cases the medicine root might not be effective.' I am afraid they thought me very poor-spirited to be afraid when there was obviously no danger, according to them. One of my servants said he was willing to try, but I think he knew quite well that I would not allow him to take the risk.

Some time later I tried to get hold of these snake-charmers again to demonstrate the genuineness of their performances to an unbeliever, but I was told they were strangers to the village from which they had come to my camp, and it was not known where they had gone.

E. O. K.



## *A MOUNTAIN CLIMB UNDER FIRE.*

BY GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG.

THE green and flashing Isonzo hurries impetuously southward on its short journey from the Carnic Alps to the sea. Athwart its course intrudes the long hog's-back of Monte Sabotino, which catches the torrent on its western quarter at Plava, and swings it eastward along the bases of its scarped northern precipices. Shut in by Monte Vodice and Monte Santo on the north, the river forces its way through deep limestone gorges round the higher, eastern end of Sabotino. There Monte San Gabriele meets it ahead, and twists it westward, shooting it safely past a little open triangle on the southern bank, where Gorizia nests picturesquely. Again the steep wall of Podgora diverts it, and drives it southward. But even then it may not race south for Trieste; for the desert plateau of the Carso blocks it finally of its purpose, and shepherds it along the edge of a narrow plain, over noisy shallows, past Gradisca to the wide and sleepy lagoons of the Gulf of Panzano.

Theoretically, the Isonzo formed, in 1915, the boundary between the Austrian and Italian armies. But Sabotino, thrusting the river and its own big head deep into the Austrian position, threatened dangerously the domination of the loftier hills on the enemy bank. By bridge and ferry, therefore, by a funicular up a rift in the eastern butt of Sabotino, by cave and gallery (electrically heated and lighted) within its rock heart, and above all by their flanking guns from Vodice on the north and from behind Gabriele on the south, commanding alike the northern precipices and the easier southern slopes of the hog's-back, the Austrians held Monte Sabotino on the Italian side of the river as an integral part of their defensive position, and as a permanent check upon the Italian advance towards Gorizia and Trieste.

Our little Slav village, Quisca, lay upon a spur that sloped down from the western end of the mountain, south towards Gorizia. Westward, we looked out from the vine-covered windows of our whitewashed cottage, across a terrace crowded with guns and ambulances, down a fall of orchard hills, brilliant with the scarlet and orange of autumn foliage, to the silvery olives of the plains, to

the blue uplands above Cormons and, beyond, to the level flash of sunlight over the misty gulf. Immediately behind our cottage the orchard rose steeply to a crest; and from this crest, hidden among the trees and vines, we could look out eastward along the southern, sloping flank of our mountain;—across deep and wooded folds at our own end, but towards the further, hostile summit over a bare and even glacis, covered with stones and protruding rocks, and slanting up to the great Austrian 'trincerone,' a trench blasted out of the solid rock which made a girdled fortress of the final cone. Never an Austrian could we see: they were all underground, ready with concealed machine-guns to sweep every curve of the barren hill-side. But time after time we watched the swarms of tiny grey figures gathering in the wooded gorges near below us: saw them rush in open order along the stone-strewn glacis, and, later, dribble hopelessly back before the devastating fire that poured out of the collar of concealed trenches round the abrupt, shell-splintered summit. After such an attack there would be many a perilous night-drive for our cars, creeping with their loads of wounded through the blackness of winter storms down the single tortuous lane off the mountain; a cliff above, and often a cliff below, and the mud-quarried track crammed with all the blocking traffic of an army. On the morrow the batteries behind Monte Vodice and from the Ter-nova behind Gabriele might return the visit, firing point-blank at the white and red-crossed dials on our cars as they rounded exposed corners on the cliff road, conspicuous as 'running deer'; or lobbing anything from a twelve to a seventeen-incher over the orchard crest above our village. Happily, this crest was sharp, and our terraced village behind it was narrow, so that they rarely succeeded in pitching big stuff right on to it. We came to look upon it as an *angolo morto*, and to speak mockingly of the valley behind us, into which the thousands of overshots descended ineffectually, as the *deposito*. On an idle day it was a distraction to make pilgrimages down into this wooded bottom, to watch the ugly tufts of grey smoke bursting suddenly out of the orchard jungles, and, perhaps, to be photographed sitting on a 'dud' seventeen-incher.

Where our Quisca spur joined the mountain the single road ran out for a space over an open neck. This was in enemy view, and very accurately ranged. It was often a matter of nice and nervous calculation, if one had strolled up the road on an afternoon, and the shells began 'following up,' to select the comfortable

moment to turn back through the barrage and get home in time for tea. For a time we had our badminton court on this open neck, as the only level ground near us; but one hardly-contested tournament was so often interrupted by shrapnel—one of the finalists complaining that he was handicapped by a frequent uncertainty as to which of the objects flying through the air he ought to volley—that we moved the court up to our yard, where the mules of sheltering machine-gun batteries formed a less fatal if more abiding hazard.

Among the folds in the nearer slopes of the southern face of Sabotino burrowed a number of 'friendly' batteries, chiefly '75's,' which raked the spine and wove spectacular patterns of bursting shells round the further, stony crown of Sabotino. On a sunny afternoon I have counted in a space of six seconds as many as seventeen bursts of different calibre and density over that bald and riven pate.

There was one battery of 75's, on the backbone above us—I think we called it the 'Upper Bresteia'—which became conspicuous for its reckless exuberance. It had the reputation of not losing a man in six months, so well was it camouflaged, and the heaviest counter-battery fire only provoked it to an instantaneous display of fanciful and accurate shooting. In the course of time—and of duty—I made the acquaintance of its commander, a hawk-eyed captain. Finding that we had a common interest in mountains, he invited me to make an ascent along the crest of Sabotino, a traverse of indefinite termination and secret purpose. ('I don't think they are actually *in* the trincerone: only go there to meet attacks; but we'll see—and I want to know something else!') We were to meet at a point on the nearer crest, he coming along the spine and I up through the folds in the southern flank.

An explanatory sergeant guided me; for in 1915 our British uniform was still unfamiliar in the region of outposts, and the contadino turned soldier was apt to term anything he did not know *Tedesco* without calculating the improbabilities. The sergeant had been a leading actor in Bologna, and beguiled the way through the hot, green, and stony valley-bottoms with recitations from 'Hamlet' in Italian. The declamation was magnificent, but of the gesticulation I was timorous, and attempted to restrain its flamboyance on the skylines. In the intervals we explained ourselves to captains and subordinate officers, alternately fire-eaters and melancholy Jaqueses, who held sway over the sylvan outpost

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camp in these advanced regions. The quick, suspicious clustering and sullen or noisy dispersal of men in the fighting zone, for whose tight-strung nerves parade discipline only survived in the presence of the familiar, were a problem to be reckoned with on all fronts. The curious questioning ferocity had in it something half animal, half childlike; and one hesitated to provoke it needlessly by the unexpected sight of a strange uniform.

My escort changed; there offered himself a cyclist (!) sergeant, an Eton and Oxford lad, holding one of those odd irresponsible positions that were possible in that year, and on those fronts. We threaded the criss-cross of wooded valleys and ridges, and then struck up a side ridge towards the backbone of the mountain, through oak copses and over rough grass and rock. Where they screened us we skirted through the woods, as this was all 'in sight,' or we crept up dry streams and hollowed rocky tracks. Once or twice we passed a deserted steading. We surprised, and were surprised by, two well-concealed batteries. I had never marked them as firing, and they were politely resentful of our discovery; but a cheerful smile and a readiness to explain everything to everybody will smooth even a war-path.

On the lower end of the main ridge roosted innumerable scattered vedettes. Grey rocks and sparse scrub hid their rustic tents and holes half dug in the earth, half roofed with stones. Wool-helmeted, sprawling, and trying to thaw their frozen socks in the cold sun, they looked a battered mountaineering crew—those men of the famous 56th Regiment. From a stone hut four foot high crawled out their lieutenant, his wounded arm bound up, and a charming conversationalist through his yawns, but a confirmed pessimist about the future. Up a stony furrow along the spine I went on alone. There was sun on my back through thin mist, but the November morning was still bitterly cold, and a speckle of frost and snow covered the stones. Here and there a larger frosted stone would stir into life, and a grey-faced sentry in a sheepskin of hoarfrost would set me a few yards further up my hidden track. The furrow shallowed, and a sheltering rib running down at right angles and in front of me on my right sank into the bare hillside. I was approaching a high knot of rocks on the ridge, Point 305, the extreme artillery observation post which directed the fire of our rear batteries. From below me on the right, where the jutting rocks merged in the fall of the hill slope, a rude sheep wall of large grey stones ran down the flank of the mountain. It was but three

feet high, blistered by rifle and machine-gun fire, and reached by no communication trenches ; but I knew it to be the main Italian position, where I had so often seen from Quisca the grey dots assembling before a fruitless attack. No cover, no sandbags, in front a bare glacis sloping up towards the frowning summit. Little wonder that in our last attack there had been six hundred casualties before the second parallel was reached, and only fifty in front of that ! Even the spy-holes of the main observation post were not protected. As I clambered up into its shelter I looked out through the natural rock jags, as casually as I might have done in our old game of man-hunting among the Lake Fells.

Where the sheep wall abutted against the rocks below me a small cave had been hollowed out. Here three young officers and a jolly little sergeant were breakfasting, lying round a flat stone in the cover of the wall, with their field-glasses shoved through its chinks. Wardens of the wall, they stretched themselves in the thin, chilly sunshine, unshaven and with their uniforms supplemented from the scrap-heap of a polar explorer's wardrobe. They made me welcome to a smothered stick fire and to a share in a medicine bottle of spirits, and—being mostly southerners—to a flood of political and literary talk, through which allusions to the hardships of their life up here, cut off from the comforts of the war-zone as completely as if they were sitting on the South Pole, only emerged fitfully—to be sprayed under again with laughter. Further down the hill, behind the wall, shifted occasionally the grey wool helmets of scattered sentries, lolling and squatting, more like an Albanian hill tribe out on a foray. Before and behind them the rocky surface was splintered and pitted with shell holes. From Quisca I had often watched the great 305's bursting along the line of this frail wall. A few rifle bullets sang over it now, and sizzled past our rock as we talked ; and there was a continuous top-top, tac-tac-tac, in spiteful bursts from the opposing machine-guns. Bad as the position was, I knew that further forward along the slope, and parallel to this wall, there lay an even slighter line, a shallow trench only occupied in the course of an attack ; and yet further forward, where the slant of the hillside dipped towards a depression immediately below the pitch of the summit and faced the grey scar of the Austrian trincerone, there was traced a third parallel, only formally to be considered a ' front line.'

I clambered up again to the broken crags on the crest, and found there this time my battery commandant : a big man, black-

bearded, and in his sheepskin and helmet not unlike a Caucasian shepherd; a joyous fellow, at whom every soldier smiled affectionately, and round whom the anxious little lieutenants chirped like crickets.

We took a preliminary observation of our ridge, squinting through a split rock all along the level, wavering, jagged crest, at the silent, threatening cone of the entrenched Austrian summit at its end. Through those dead-looking, white and splintered rocks on its face there must be many eyes watching stealthily like ours. That innocent nose of cliff commanding the last dip we knew to be a hollow shell of machine-guns. Even as we looked, a long shrill hoot, like a sudden wind-gust over a wall, passed over our heads from behind; and the next instant the nose disappeared in a huge, spreading fungus of black fumes and stone dust.

We worked a few feet down the cliffs of the north face, and out on to an invisible rock eyrie, where a little mountain gun perched dangerously, its embrasure closed by a rock shutter. After weeks of staring at the big southern slopes of Sabotino lumbering up the northern sky, it was a sudden and dramatic view. Against a far horizon blazed the great white wall of the Alps, with the flashing horn of Monte Nero—won for us by a brilliant rush of our Alpinist—towering like a lighthouse over the surf of lesser hills. And through this mountain chaos, from the north, the Isonzo hurled itself straight at us. Striking the cliffs far below to our left, the torrent bent sharply, and tore along the bases of the cliffs twelve hundred feet below, to disappear in the yet deeper gorges on our right, where the heights of Vodice and Monte Santo challenged the summit of our Sabotino across the narrow rift. Deep down in the angle of the river on our left lay the red-tiled ruins of Plava, among vines and limestone crags. In the first rush of the war the Italians had desperately carried the passage of the river at Plava, and their trenches and caves were now visible on the steep slopes of the far side, where they clung unbelievably to the lowest corner of Monte Kuk: a tiny 'blind' zone of occupation, protected by the very abruptness of the cliffs above from the direct fire of the enemy trenches and batteries over their heads. Right opposite to us across the gorge, and unpleasantly close, leaned out the walls of Monte Kuk and Monte Vodice. The lines of wire and entrenchment led the eye down their sides into the gorge, and out on to a little shoulder overhanging the river, where the remains of the red and white village of Zagorra were tattered through a maze of

raw trenches. Among these, the Italians and Austrians crept against each other through the ruins on the steep scarp, in places holding even opposing ends of the same cottage. Our shells were bursting up along the lines of the trenches, and on the face of Vodice blazed and smouldered a number of travelling conflagrations.

On the near side of the river ran the remains of the railway, protected, where it passed below us, from the fall of cliff and scree by a surface tunnel; which was later to form a base for the great attack by which the Italians carried the grim slopes of Vodice opposite. On the far side of the river ran the road, shell-pocked and neutralised, with just a little barrier of bushes to mark where the formal front line of the Austrians descended from the hills, crossed the river, sketched itself in imagination somewhere along the cliffs of Sabotino below us, and then ascended diagonally, to take concrete shape on the summit to our right, where the easier southern slopes of the hill made fighting and entrenching again a possibility.

That river road was to become familiar a year or two later, when the enemy had been forced back off Kuk and Vodice, and our cars could ply along it, to the point, at least, where they became exposed to direct fire from Santo and Gabriele at the end of the gorge. In 1917, when Santo itself was at last carried and the enemy were back as far as the summit of Gabriele, we could even walk round the rest of the road, on foot and at night, to where the gorge emerged at Gorizia. But it was always a breathless passage, especially along the base of Gabriele, with the feeling of folk listening in the trenches above, ready to lob surprises over on to the road if ever a sudden flash of moonlight or an incautious step gave them reason for suspicion. Even now I could see a few grey figures stealing cautiously along the inside edge of the road under Zagorra, covered by the cliffs from the sight of the trenches above them; and, equally unseen by them, a stir of brown-grey figures in those very Austrian trenches above. Beyond them, on the road, lay a dark grey patch or two—bodies unrecovered: 'Waiting for a priest to reach them!' said the gunner cynically. 'Do you never fire down into their trenches?' I asked him. He grinned: 'If we did, by day, we should soon be blown off this ridge and half the crest with us! They've got some big fellows opposite there, up curved tunnels. Up go their shutters, bang they go, and they're off into the mountain again long before our big guns behind can plaster them—even if they could spot them!'



A grey figure detached itself from the line creeping under the road cliff, and bolting across to the river side dipped a bottle in the water. Immediately a shot or two rang out and echoed up the cliffs—and a mysterious sound was explained that had been puzzling me all the morning on the far side of the crest. I had constantly heard it, a little roar or ruckle over the rocks, intermittent but regular, not quite the sound of a wind-gust, and yet distinct from the sharp tac of rifle or machine-gun fire. It was the echo of shots in the gorge; the reports absorbed in the wind and only the echoes surviving, drawn out along the curve of the cliffs in long fluttering sighs, fierce little waves of following whispers.

The sun was now beating upon us hotly: the hardy grass was already so dry that a match which I dropped started a little hiss of fire. The midday hush, for mess and siesta, which proved too strong in the South even for the passion of fighting, had settled down upon the landscape. The growl of guns over the distant Carso sounded sleepy and sporadic. 'Now we can really start,' said the captain, and threw off his sheepskin, appearing in an immaculate tunic. We climbed back on to the spines upon the ridge, and crouched among the spillikins of rock. Slowly and with every precaution we crept forward along the backbone, using every projection as cover. Before us loomed always that threatening cone, bulging to peep at us round every corner, lifting to glare down at us over every protuberance, menacing and lilac-shadowed, with a stealthy suggestion of waiting only for some unguarded movement. The ridge seemed now like the arête of Crib Goch, now like the buttressed cliffs above the Wye. On our left fell the loose perpendicular crags; on the centre edge rose a succession of mild, broken rocks, and on our right slanted down the rubble-littered, limestone glacis. Natural difficulties there were none. A few feet below on our right a Sunday school could have paraded in security. Even along the edge an active man could have strolled with his hands in his pockets. It seemed absurd to have to stoop and wriggle and crawl on fingers and toes. There was all the labour of stalking, with the uncomfortable sensation of being stalked thrown in. The hills looked as empty of life as the northern Highlands; and yet, from three sides of us powerful glasses would be watching the crest for any movement—from the heights of Podgora and Oslavia immediately south of us, from across the gorge on the north, and of course from the dominating summit ahead. To move along a skyline so as to keep continually covered on three

sides is not without difficulty. Always before us leered and peered that lilac-shadowed cone. Where our crest was of torn rocks it was usually possible to manœuvre so that some spike or bollard shut off its vicious lift ; but over the bare patches and across the open depressions we had to worm our way towards it singly and craftily. The snap of a careless pebble thundered in the hot silence and instantly froze us into spider-like immobility flat upon the sharp burning splinters.

I knew that we must be approaching the upper end of our forward parallel, a surface scratch down the cheerless glacis on our right. A sylphine snuggle across an exposed neck came to an end, and, with a breath of relief, I put up my hand to pull myself up under the cover of some 'letter-boxed' rocks. My hand gripped a grit-covered military boot ! The scare was mutual, for the observer, jammed in the crack above me, had been so intently watching the Austrian trincerone just ahead that our approach had been undetected. The captain came up, and we exchanged murmurs and sandwiches. Our rag-bound friend had started his watch at dawn, and did not look to return before the fall of darkness. What an amateur, surface war we fought during that first winter !—clinging to crannies, sheltering under sheep-walls, charging across bare slopes, against an enemy protected by years of engineering forethought, housed by hundreds in caverns, and reaching through underground passages guns well covered or trenches blasted out of rock and completed with masonry.

Our luncheon was interrupted by a sharp tac-tacking of machine-guns and by a nervous spitting of rifle-fire, apparently from the trincerone. Even this was better than the grim, shadowy silence that darkened my every recurring glimpse of the detestable cone ! The noise died down, and, very reluctantly, I realised that we were to push forward still further.

Our advance was rendered more perilous by the fact that the ridge, although it still cropped out in back-fins of shelter, showed now a general tendency to dip towards the last depression under the summit. So close were we now, and the big pyramid ahead bulked so steeply up our sky and so largely athwart our horizon, that it was impossible, moving with every precaution, not to keep some part of its outline continually in view ; which meant being ourselves visible from now one, now another, portion of the scarred and stony sugar-loaf. We could only hope that the daily quartering of all its upper surfaces by our own batteries might have driven

observation from the outer edges to more central, and therefore avoidable, points. This continued imminence of the summit, so near and yet so hopelessly unattainable, recalled to me persistently my last great mountain climb the year before in the Alps. Then, for all a long forenoon and in the same direction under the sun, we had fought our way over the stupendous difficulties of the Gspaltenhorn Ridge, with the summits looming similarly, right above us, right ahead. But what a contrast! Then the perils, intrinsic and sane, had rejoiced the heart and conceded a fair recognition to strength and skill; but now, their arbitrary negation of all human claims daunted the mind, offering to courage and craft only an earlier opportunity for annihilation. For the first time I saw a summit near with nothing but distinct distaste; and never before had the sight provoked little but an eagerness for the moment to come for retreat.

As the knobs on this dipping edge afforded us all too little cover, we dropped a few feet down the cliffs of the northern face; and traversed along the precipitous crags. This exposed us to the hills across the gorge, but we were hidden at least from that hateful summit. The crags were loose and broken; long spits of scree ran up between them, and straggling trees and scrub clung to the ledges and gullies. Far below, the scree-slopes slid in under a green shadow of tree-tops, and yet farther below, behind the tree-tops, the blue-green ribbon of the Isonzo blinked up out of the gorge, tussling its way between worn rims of grey and russet limestone. The clamour of that older, primeval quarrel came up to us in little murmuring gusts through the hollows in the crags.

An impassable bluff drove us again up on to the crest; and a cleft on the upper rim of the glacis gave us occasion for a comfortable pause. To evade the magnetic stare of the cone ahead, I glanced back along the stone-covered slope. Some way behind me a vagueness of grey stones seemed to click into shape, and I was looking at a grey-uniformed figure, all but indistinguishable, and returning so imperceptibly to the dust of which it was made as no longer to arouse any emotion of human kinship. The captain followed my eye:—'From our attack in May': and he added grimly,—'useful still: marks this end of our third parallel!' On the bald slope up near the crest there was no trace of the foremost 'trench'—a mere scoop down the hillside—although lower down, where the soil had accumulated, the line had been traceable from our view-point above Quisca. Even the tangled labyrinths

of wire in front, perpetually destroyed and as perpetually renewed, were, here, out of sight over the dip: so, it was 'useful'! Well, and why not? Better this tranquil transition among the mountains, with the body of some service still to the cause in which the spirit had sacrificed itself, than an unknown grave in a crowded cemetery a little further back.

Clearly we were ahead of the Italian front line; and, as a consequence, the front of the Austrian zone, slanting forward from the summit down and across the cliffs on our left, must now be stretching uncomfortably far behind us! Back towards Plava, where both armies commanded both sides, the gorge, in daylight, might fairly be regarded as neutral territory; but where the Austrians held the mountains on both sides, as they did certainly here close to the cone of Sabotino, it was a nice point as to how far forward, even by day, they might be occupying their formal zone. They would certainly be holding the gorge below and behind us, and there might be awkward posts pushed up along the cliffs, and even perched close beneath us among the screes and rocks.

A white mist came over the sun, and the air at this height at once began to feel chill. I checked a shiver. A blue-grey boss on the skyline of the summit above our heads bulged outward to glare at me. The more I shrank together, the more it followed me round. I turned my shoulder on it, crossly, and looked out southward across the lower valleys of chestnuts and the lesser hills, to where the Isonzo, having escaped through the narrows behind the bluff end of Sabotino, bent back past us on the right, and glinted along the bases of Gabriele and of the Carso away to the sea behind us. And the moment favoured me. A dance of white rays broke through the drift of mist over the dip between Gabriele and the Carso: it illuminated a narrow wedge of green trees, and upon this there flashed into sight, like the vision of some city of fairyland, the floating castle, the glistening bridge-arches, the red roofs and the magic white turrets of Gorizia! Never prophet could have been given more beautifully, or more unattainably, the first vision of a promised land. All the dreamlike luxuries, of beauty, of baths, of beds, of warmth, even of shops! There they lay, within an easy hour's walk downhill! And for months we had been clinging, and for all but a year more we should still be clinging to the wretchedness of these cold-hearted crags and hummocks, to caves, to ruins, to chilly mud, to canned things and to savagery! I know of no sensation comparable to the baffled helplessness with which,

through years of trench warfare, one continued to see, and to sigh for, some point of promise behind the enemy line! The desire for it was one's own; the disappointments were one's own; the realisation would have been one's own. But fate and discipline denied one the only palliative for hope deferred, the individual liberty of initiative which forces a man out, occupied and not disheartened, again and again on the path towards attainment.

The first revelation of the tantalising city etched this feeling very deep. I had it still in mind some two years later, when the enemy in their turn were hanging on to their sweltering trenches on the hills behind Gorizia, while we ourselves were free to bathe through all the parching July afternoons in the snow-born rapids of the Isonzo. True that they spurted an occasional shrapnel over us; but these admissions of envy only accentuated the pleasure.

'Why, there's an electric-tram running there!' I whispered.

'That's nothing! In the summer we used to see officers and ladies playing tennis in white flannels—in *white flannels!*—tennis!'

'But—what a mark!'

'But—we've got to take that city *whole!* We're not allowed to fire on it—at present! *But*—if you and I only go out for a stroll up here together, all of us may get harried off this confounded hill like rabbits, by guns here—and there—and there!'—and he swept his arm round three quarters of the compass.—'No one cares if *we* stay "whole" or not!'

He started to creep forward again along the edge of the crest, and I followed, conscious of a fervent hope that he had some definite end in view for our expedition, worthy of the nerve-tension it was beginning to cause me. Wherever I raised my head to move, the summit scowled. The Austrian entanglements of new and old wire stretched across its base before us, and looked like a great, expectant web, lurking among the limestone blocks and raw white splinters. The rock-piled lip of the trincerone, above and behind the wire, seemed alive with white eyes, which blinked whenever I glanced at it, and with the tiny black circles of pointing barrels. Seen through crannies or round corners as I moved, the sombre face of the cone flickered, and appeared to recede and advance menacingly. I could not resist the feeling that, similarly, the dozens of watching white eyes must be seeing at moments my fingers appearing round some edge, distorted and magnified grotesquely by the same treacherous alternations, and that they must be only waiting for the second when, at some gap ahead obvious to

them but as yet unknown to me, more of me would be delivered over to their black muzzles ! The silence seemed full of the rustling of my clothes ; and the suspense grew so ludicrously exaggerated that I longed to laugh, to stand up, and to say petulantly that I wouldn't play any more : the child's instinct to rush out on the searcher at hide-and-seek before he is spied, and not wait longer for the assurance that it is really all a game !

We lay close-packed behind the last knot of rock above the short, bare descent to the dip : close-packed in a furrow, with our noses out over the edge of the northern cliff. I did not know what the captain was prospecting. I was only concerned myself to trace out some feasible line of holds down to the cover of the nearest gully ! The stillness seemed charged with suspense to cracking point. And then, immediately, there began one of those dramatic shifts of scene, and of feeling, which were alone possible during the years of an existence that lived only upon the next incident, and which alone, also, rendered its artificial tedium possible. In the transparent ether, midway between my eyes and the opposing mountains, there was born, instantaneously, a great incandescent nasturtium flower, with slowly unfolding petals. So slight was the wind that it kept its flaming flower shape, as it hovered exquisitely up the cañon. In its place there materialised out of the void two evil-looking blossoms, of a quality of green and oily silk, luminous green, streaked with a glossy, wicked black. And then, pandemonium broke loose ! An irrepressible battery of 75's down the ridge behind us—the captain's own, it transpired—began to weave its witch-dance of drumming explosions round the unhappy head of Sabotino above us. The heavy Austrian guns took up the challenge, and the quiet air was torn into lengths overhead, with a shrill rending of silk, by the criss-crossing of shells from at least seven directions. One venomous diagonal screamed from the pass between Kuk and Vodice ; another crossed us overhead, from the plateau behind Santo ; yet another hooted past us on the right, from the Ternova plateau behind Gabriele. Our own larger batteries joined in from over the hills, completing the circle of intimidating fire that roofed us in. And our friends were our chief danger ; for they varied their counter-battery fire by an occasional sportive thunder-burst and spouting of black mushrooms on the nose in front of us and along the rift of the trincerone. The blast of noise was appalling ; and there is nothing so upsetting as an unexpected noise. I shot over the edge in a single somersault, and slid down the cliff, catching at anything that caught me. The

captain followed, at the same gap ; and as he had the advantage of greater length, I was soon aware that he was sliding down my back rather faster than I slid down the cliff. As this fashion of accelerated descent, which all too closely resembled the foolish habit of running down a moving Tube stairway, seemed unsound from a climbing point of view, I checked myself at the first royal ledge, and allowed him to shoot down clear of me, on to more legitimate holds. The familiar pull of gravity against my fingers and toes at once restored my cheerfulness. Gravity was an old and fair-minded opponent. In my relief I felt almost inclined to begin playing with him, as I shifted comfortably upon the steep ledges. At the same time my mind was filled with an infantile delight in the thought of the glorious smash that would follow, were any two of these intersecting shuttles of sound overhead to meet exactly end-on !

I looked down at the captain, expecting to exchange the sympathetic grins of schoolboys caught apple-stealing : but the back of his head was turned to me, as he craned out away from the cliff. Past his head the gorge looked immeasurably deep : the green tops of the trees were reaching up at us from another world, like the remote reflections of the sky seen in the depths of a clear lake. Buried among these trees—it had been invisible before—I now saw a small white building, probably some office connected with the ruined railway ; and round it—yes—there was a scurry of small dots in uniform, agitated as ants when you lift a flat stone.

'*That* was what I came to find out !' hissed the captain up at me. '*They do* use the house !'

I was glad that the information was valuable, for its acquisition appeared to me to have cost a disproportionate amount in projectiles and risk ; but then—so did most of the objectives attained in the war !

He began furiously stamping loose rubble and blocks off the crags, and sending them clattering down on to the scree-slopes and in among the trees. I made rapidly certain that our position among the broken rocks, at that height, must be practically undetectable from below, and that the rock-fall would inevitably be attributed to the inferno of shells shattering upon the ridge just above us, and then I joined in heartily. There is a mountaineering law which forbids any indulgence in the delight of hurling rocks over cliffs. I had therefore a twofold satisfaction, in feeling free for once from this inhibition, and in getting something of my own back at last for the unkindly snap-shooting at our ambulances.



'I wish it were hand-bombs!' said my friend wistfully; adding, more contentedly, 'and it shall be, some charitable night!'

The aimless clamour died down. Only an occasional 'prupp' from a distant battery suggested that some Major had just hurried back from lunch, and felt that he ought to let off something, to show zeal. After a space of silence, the uncomfortable silence that follows, in company, any display of unnecessary emotion, the solitary 'phit' of a rifle sighed from the woods below. It had no imitators. Possibly a sentry had been waiting for the psychological moment to convince the scenery that he too had been awake all along!

The oppression of solitude, and of suspense, always present among mountains or over wide expanses, returned. Only the eager purpose of the river hustled narrowly past far below, absorbed in its own isolated quarrel: and its assertiveness came up to us again, in little gusts through the cliffs.

A return along the crest by the way we had come did not commend itself. The inimical stare of the summit would be even more awkward to elude in a retreat than on our approach. I proposed that, since we had come out for a climb, and had manifestly failed to reach our summit, we ought at least to 'col' the ridge, and return by a different route. The line I selected, a traverse along the face of the northern cliffs, only a few yards below the obvious and easy ridge, I must admit to have been too arbitrary a variation to satisfy classical mountaineering standards. But there was consolation in the thought that the practice of 'girdling' buttresses has recently become popular in our islands; and this was, in the strictest sense, a 'girdle traverse.' The rock was spiky, thirsty, and incredibly rotten. Far too much of the line led across scree-spits, rubble-bluffs, and fractious gullies filled with prickly scrub. Only rarely there intruded passages over sound rock. I scrambled expressly up one rickety bluff, in order to have the pleasure of circling across its upper section by a firm gallery. Two years later, coming through a tunnel from the far side of the crest, I re-identified my gallery: in the interval it had been converted into a covered platform for a brace of heavy guns.

We kept in mind our outpost friend of the morning, in his eyrie on the ridge above; and his compatriot was all enthusiasm to startle him a second time, from a different direction. As I was doubtful what form his first reflex action might take, no sooner was the crag identified than I lagged into second place, and was

content to scramble slowly up the rift behind his tower, allowing the first froth of the jest plenty of time to blow over my head. But the lad merely cocked his eye over the edge, and chuckled liquidly : ' *Va bene !* I expected you back from that kinema show before ! ' Our scratches and ruffled tunics seemed to amuse him : ' Been catching shells on the banks of the blue Isonzo ? Eigh !—every man to his own amusements ! '

The guns had settled down again to their monotonous afternoon exchanges. The shells began to burst futilely in ragged lines up and down the patient hill-sides. The vineyards spouted black earth and fumes, the rocks black fumes and splinters. New fires smouldered, with tongues of pallid flame, along the opposite side of the gorge. Even the pursuing stare of the summit was baffled behind a continuous spurting of inky smoke-veils. Man had resumed his peculiar work and his labour until the evening.

We ate some surviving sandwiches under cover of the eyrie. Somehow the companionship of that dusty boot in the crack over my head gave me a surprisingly soothing sense of having returned behind the pale of humanity. Our careful retreat down the remainder of the hog's-back seemed casual in comparison with what had passed before. At the parting of our ways I gave a last look back along our eventful, wavering ridge, and up at the insolent lift of its now distant cone. Then I ducked behind a side-rib, and tramped off the mountain down a sheltered, stony hollow. Among the rise and fall of the chestnut valleys the clustering of suspicious camps no longer troubled me. They felt so secure, almost domestic : as far removed from the malignant, throat-clutching blight that infected the immediate neighbourhood of the opposing trenches on the mountain as the atmosphere of England used to seem to those returning home on leave from the threatened zones of France and Flanders.

That evening, from the orchard behind our quarters, I saw the whole profile of Monte Sabotino, ridge and summit, outlined in a violet unity of shadow. Their mortal estrangement of the morning seemed already unimaginable. It almost needed the foolish thunder of the ' eventide ' shells, bursting on the fall of the terraces behind me, to persuade me that our expedition had not been merely an abortive mountain scramble, abandoned prematurely ; that a little more persistence would not have taken us in a few more minutes up over that treacherous cone ; and to remind me that ingenuity and courage, hardship and death incalculable, had gone, and must yet go, to the conquest of those few feet.

# THE 'FACTS' IN POETRY.

BY MAURICE HEWLETT.

THE old definition of Poetry, that it is a branch of literature which 'states the facts and rhymes in places,' comes into mind when reflecting upon the evil days which have befallen the Sublime—that high Sublime of which Longinus discoursed with such sagacity, and Burke with such a want of it. It is badly blown upon, that 'big Bow-wow,' as Sir Walter called it. It has a kind of taste which the Georgian poets cannot away with. The reaction has been sharp, not to say astringent. For whereas the Sublime stated too few facts and rhymed in too many places, now we have no rhymes at all, and the facts thrown out with a shovel. To walk through the neo-Georgian page is to set one longing for the steam-roller upon it, to set one sighing for the good easy travelling of the 'seventies and 'eighties, when you could glide down quires of Swinburne or William Morris on rivers of smooth iambs or brisk tidal freshets of anapæsts. Yet it is not to be wondered at. We have suffered a surfeit of uplifting. The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. No later ago than the 'nineties there was an Ossianic revival. Fiona Macleod was the forensic name of a bard who, in private life, was a gentleman, a man of letters, of wide reading, and a great deal of wit. That he found a market for his vaporous highland rhetoric can have surprised nobody more than himself; but he found a very good market indeed, and came in, as they say, on the top of it. That is what, even in our day, an ingenious Oriental has also done; so true it is that there will always be readers who demand of literature an anodyne rather than a stimulant. But what proved to be fatal to Fiona Macleod was her daring the ordeal of the theatre. You may drug yourself with written words until you fall happily asleep: on the stage something must happen. On Fiona's nothing did until the middle of the second act, and what happened then was final. I well remember sitting through her play, mostly in literal, and quite in figurative, darkness. The auditorium was like night, the stage crepuscular. Keen blasts of air blew from it; dim grey

shapes flitted moaning about it, talking of the weather and lifting up their arms. One did not know what else they talked of, unless it was mythology; but I remember that they did nothing else. It seemed that one had been sitting there for weeks before the end came—and the end was this. In a lull of the flitting and talk, a distraught old man in a white beard stood forward and blinked at us. Then he smote himself upon the forehead once or twice, saying 'Wind, wind, nothing but wind!' and looked very much surprised when the whole audience rose at him, roaring unquenchable laughter—which was the end of the play. Against false sublimity of the kind the neo-Georgians are protesting now with chunks of ugly and unrelated facts.

The eighteenth century, when it took hold of the Sublime and ran it hard, was exceedingly unsuited to deal with any such thing. Taste, which had been its safest possession, then deserted it. Gray, with as cool a judgment in art as you could have wished for, was much bitten with Ossian, which to us is so much wool-work; but Gray himself had produced some warrantable specimens of the false sublime. There is no difference in kind, only in degree, between 'The Bard' and 'The Sisters,' and the vapid impersonations of Mason, or the 'big Bow-wow' of Sir Walter Scott. From Gray's time, indeed, until Wordsworth's, real sublimity disappeared in a flood of insincere, frothy stuff which had no purpose in art at all but to produce—which, whatever it did, it now does not—a frame of mind in the reader who, it was then believed, could be moved and uplifted less easily by facts than by qualifications of them. It would not be untrue to consider the literary period of 1750–1800 as the reign of the adjective—a reign whose path was made smooth and its way straight by the study of Longinus and the sophistications of Burke. The Greek had desiderated elevation of thought, and believed it could be induced by inflation of language; Burke saw the root of sublimity in terror, and laid it down that 'to make anything very terrible obscurity seems in general to be necessary.' He may be excused for taking things as he found them. You had had from Gray:

'Now the storm begins to lower,  
(Haste, the loom of Hell prepare,)  
Iron sleet of arrowy shower  
Hurtles in the darken'd air';

who then invoked—

'Mista, black, terrific maid,'

and other lath-and-plaster machines of the sort. From Mason and his likes you had nothing else. Sad stuff—but if you choose to depend upon adjectives for inducing a frame of mind, that is what happens to poetry.

It has been truly said that the adjective is the natural enemy of the verb. Of course it is, and of the noun, too : for every noun heightened by a qualification you can show a score bled to death. Not a doubt of it but the high Sublime has died of adjectives. Longinus, I know, declared that 'vastness and mystery' are concomitants of sublimity, and his disciples saw no readier way of getting either than by underscoring the facts with which they dealt. But let the reader be pleased to observe what troubles involve Gray in the last two lines of the quatrain just quoted from him : in the first of them a bald tautology, since his qualification of the effect merely forestalls that of the cause ; in the second, his anticipation of the result of the hurtling of arrows washes out the value there might have been in that strong verb. For, obviously, if you state that the air is already 'darken'd air,' it is not the hurtling which is going to darken it. It was not, however, Longinus who went on from his postulate to infer that, since 'vastness and mystery' are necessary, therefore 'a clear idea is a little idea.' That was Burke, and arrant nonsense it is. What is extraordinary, though, is that, relying as he did on the Book of Job to prove his case, he did not see how precise the images in that great poem are.

'Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee ? Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow ? . . . Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook ? Will he make a covenant with thee ?'

Vastness, yes, and mystery ; sublimity enough : but what could be clearer ? And what adjectives do you find there to qualify your great facts ? Not one.

It is hardly worth while to remark that Literature has no way of escape from the facts *via* vagueness and mystery. It may try to transcend the facts, but it cannot escape them. You don't escape a thing by jumping over it. Literature is an art, and depends upon the facts, because Life does. But when you seek rather to induce a frame of mind than clothe the spirit of fact, it is astonishing how little fact you can do with. I remember calling one day, in Florence, upon the learned and gifted lady who chooses in Literature to be known as Vernon Lee. I found

her in her drawing-room with a book, half a sheet of note-paper, a pencil, and a frown. The book was a volume of Swinburne, the half-sheet was blank, and my friend greatly irritated. She told me that she had been going through 'Hertha,' intending to jot down 'the facts' as she went. But there was nothing to jot. Two things, among others, astonish one in Swinburne: the small proportion of fact to diction, the large proportion of adjective to fact.

Nevertheless, it does not do to generalise about Literature. No doubt there is a high Sublime to be reached. Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth will lift you to it upon ever-widening circles of splendid imagery. Burke's notion that you cannot be supremely moved unless you experience 'delightful horror' is nonsense. You can be moved by feeling and sharing the poet's power and mastery. And that is what happens to us when, on his broad back, we sweep upwards and spurn the stars with our footsoles. But there is another way of uplifting in which no preparation or building up of imagery is used at all. Supreme emotion may be caused by the use of significant fact alone; and Longinus, the exponent of the Sublime, was forced to allow it, though it was against the run of his argument. There is a sublimity, he says, which will do 'like a flash of lightning' what skill, art, and arrangement may attain in a treatise, or the use of lofty diction persuade you into believing. That kind of sublime resides in fact. 'A bare idea,' he says, 'by itself, without spoken word, sometimes excites our admiration because of the greatness of soul implied.' He gives two examples from Homer, one being the silence of Aias in Hades, when Odysseus went down and saw him there among the dead heroes; and then a third, and a very interesting one, from the Pentateuch. He takes it, he says, 'from the legislator of the Jews, no ordinary man.' In fact, Moses. 'God said—what? Let there be light; and there was light.'

As sublime as you can have—but perfectly unqualified. If he had searched the Scriptures further he would have found examples of that sort of sublimity in every page. To say no more of Job, he could have paralleled the silence of Aias, from the Apocalypse. 'And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour,'—than which, considering all things, I don't know a more tremendous statement in the whole range of the Bible.

But Longinus confines himself to epic poetry and rhetoric for

his examples both of the high and elevated, and of the other sublime. I wish to go lower in the scale, and to suggest that in lyric poetry also there is a sublimity discernible which depends for its power upon the exact contrary of the high sublimity; one which depends upon fact alone, upon plainness of statement and perfect clearness, and which would be diminished, would imperil, even lose, its sublimity by any vagueness or vastness or elevation or inflation of language. To me the most curious thing about that sort of sublimity is that the lower you go in the pretensions of poetry the more of it you get. It is, indeed, the only kind of sublimity or uplift which you do get. And it follows, and is true, that the closer the poet is to the folk, the common people, the less he relies upon qualifying adjectives, and the more upon stark fact. It is partly because of this lowly origin (for I cannot doubt but that it originated where we find it most frequently), and partly because of its innocence of apparatus, that I call this kind of power in literature the Little Sublime, and seek to distinguish it from the 'big Bow-wow' or High Sublime.

One needs go no farther afield than 'The Ancient Mariner' to find an example of each kind of sublimity. Here, firstly, is the High Sublime:

'O wedding guest! this soul hath been  
Alone on a wide, wide sea:  
So lonely 'twas, that God himself  
Scarce seemèd there to be.'

There is a fine image there, as vague as you please, as vague indeed as men's ideas about God are bound to be. It gets its effect by qualification, by adjective. It is not enough for the poet, though it might well have been, that he was alone at sea: he feels bound to tell you more about the sea, and to tell it you twice; and then he must attempt to tell you how much alone he was. But it is a fine image, all the same. Now, farther on, we have a good example of the Little Sublime:

'O happy living things! no tongue  
Their beauty might declare:  
A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
And I blessed them unaware.'

Mere statement of what happened: *A spring of love gushed from my heart.* You may be moved by both, or by one more than



another ; but I as a human being declare that the things which move me most are the things which men do, not the things which they think. When I read in a poem, just in that place in it (for that is essential), that 'a spring of love' gushed from the heart I feel that flash of lightning which Longinus was driven to admit of. No adjective, no qualification ; any qualification would have weakened it. Just in that place, after long tension, that supreme fact has the effect of sublimity upon me. It lifts, and it moves. I receive 'a sudden glory.'

As I have said, you find such fierce and stabbing simplicity chiefly in the folk-poets. Homer is one of them, whoever Homer was. The Bible is another, however and by whomsoever the narrative parts of it were written and compiled. I need not enlarge here upon the precision of the statements there. Fact is all in all. There is neither heightening nor the need of it. Other poets, not at all of the folk, and for other reasons, have depended upon fact and plain statement ; Dante was one, a very learned hand ; Chaucer was one, though he was a court poet. But the man of ours whom I have chiefly in my mind at the moment is Sir Thomas Malory ; and that for a particular reason. First, however, consider this :

*Lancelot in the Castle of the Sangreal* : 'So came he to the chamber door, and would have entered. And anon a voice said to him, Flee, Lancelot, and enter not, for thou oughtest not to do it. And if thou enter thou shalt forthink it. Then he withdrew him back right heavy. Then looked he up in the midst of the chamber and saw a table of silver and the holy vessel covered with red samite, and many angels about it, whereof one held a candle of wax burning, and the other held a cross and the ornaments of an altar ; and before the holy vessel he saw a good man clothed as a priest. And it seemed he was at the sacrificing of the mass. And it seemed to Lancelot that above the priest's hands were three men, whereof the two put the youngest by likeness between the priest's hands, and so he lift it up right high and seemed to show it to the people.'

That is naked language, as naked as the Bible, but as vivid and as beautiful. No folk-speech could have been less adorned, more unqualified. The reason for its bareness is resident in the very nature of romance. Romance looked at life with new eyes and saw everything isolated, startling, strange. The only possible way of rendering that strangeness was to keep the expression as

naked as the thing. Any adjective except its literal equivalent would have blurred the image. Folk-poets may have relied upon fact because, to them, it was the most momentous thing in life. The romance writers valued it because of its strangeness—a strangeness in which they saw an essential element of beauty.

But after Malory and the Bible, when Literature found itself and became more art than instinct, the poets mounted their high horses. Literature then shared functions with rhetoric and cookery, sought to persuade, sought to beguile. You had the rodomontade of Marlowe, the sophisticated, italianated romance of Spenser; you had Shakespeare, who could do everything, and had something of everything, including some of the Little Sublime as well as much of the Big; then Milton, who had practically none; then the Augustans, who developed the false sublime; and then the revival. At the very beginning of that revival—before Burns, before Blake—you find a beautiful example of the Little Sublime in Lady Anne Lindsay's 'Auld Robin Gray.' There are two lines in the first stanza of that masterpiece which are as fine an example as I know of the poetical use of fact in poetry. And yet in themselves they are nothing at all.

'Young Jamie loved me well,  
And sought me for his bride,  
But saving a crown  
He had nothing else beside :  
To make the crown a pound  
Young Jamie went to sea ;  
*And the crown and the pound  
They were both for me.'*

*Mentem mortalia tangunt.* Those last two lines always move me. The pathos of the story, the *clou* of the tragedy is in so inconsiderable a thing as that. The whole stanza is amazingly good narrative, but the 'sudden glory' comes at the end. You are let into a cottage interior. A flash of lightning—and you see into the heart.

Lady Anne caught the art of that levin-stroke (for with her it *was* art) from the ballads, which obviously she knew. Where did Wordsworth get it, except under the urge of his daemon? Unfortunately, though he knew how to use it, and none better, he allowed himself also to abuse it. Here is a curious case, where he overdoes it, and endangers a poem; and then saves it by a line—one line of the real thing:

'The cock is crowing,  
 The stream is flowing,  
 The small birds twitter,  
 The lake doth glitter,  
 The green field sleeps in the sun ;  
 The oldest and youngest  
 Are at work with the strongest,  
 The cattle are grazing,  
 Their heads never raising :  
*There are forty feeding like one !*'

All that is a catalogue, and, to me, perfectly ineffective, until the last line—the solvent of his brew, which absolutely does the poet's business. Everything drops into its place. Really, it is like a penny in a slot which sets all sorts of machines turning and running about. What was it happened—I forget—whereupon 'the butcher began to kill the ox, the ox began to drink the water, the water began to quench the fire, the fire began to burn the stick, the stick began to beat the dog, the dog began to bite the pig'—and the pig to get over the stile? The last line of Wordsworth's 'Poem by Brothers' Water' has that effect upon all the others, to my ear.

One should not, Socrates said, lay hands upon one's father Parmenides, and I don't want to dwell upon what is undoubtedly true, that Wordsworth ran the use of plain statement to death. Fact ill-used is worse than none; fact out of place will kill a poem dead. Rightly placed, one fact will make a poem immortal. My last quotation should have settled that. To Wordsworth, I have no doubt, fact was never out of place. Yet—

'I've measured it from side to side,  
 'Tis six feet long and three feet wide,'

is nothing but annoying to the reader. There are many worse cases than that, but I am not going to consider them now. He is a great poet, and may do what he likes for me.

And Crabbe :

'Squire Thomas flattered long a wealthy aunt';

or

'Grave Jonas Kindred, Sybil Kindred's sire,  
 Was six feet high, and looked six inches higher.'

It didn't matter how grave he was, or how high—but Crabbe could never see it.

I said a moment ago that the nearer you went to the people, the more of the Little Sublime you found. I am sure that is very true. Fact is the constant daily concern of the people, who are up against it at every turn. They don't appreciate quality; their stock of adjectives is restricted, and highly conventional. I have often thought that to hear a good peasant talk is something like listening to Homer, when it is not almost exactly like hearing the Bible, as in Scotland it still is. Well, Homer is folk-poetry, and so is the Bible. The adjectives in each are either conventional or literal. If Homer calls a wave blue, it *is* blue—and when the Bible says, He went forth a leper as white as snow—there's no mistake whatever about his whiteness. The Ballads are just like that, and I shall close my paper with them.

There are bad ballads as well as good ones; but the bad ballads are never false, and consequently not nearly so bad as bad sublimity—as Collins on the Passions, or Gray on the Bards. Those things commit the sin against the Holy Ghost. Bad ballads, like the Robin Hood set, are merely stupid. The good ballads are among the most beautiful things that we possess. Let anyone read the greatest of all, 'The Wife of Usher's Well.' That is, as the lawyers say, my case. I call attention (a) to the abundance and significance of plain fact in it; (b) to its extraordinary frugality in the use of adjectival qualification; (c) to the magic, or romantic envelopment which is obtained by the use of fact alone. It is not possible to get better narrative than that, or the effect of the supernatural with a greater parsimony of means. It is all simple, straightforward relation until we come to—

'It fell about the Martinmas,  
When nights are lang and mirk,  
The carlin wife's three sons came home,  
And their hats were of the birk';

and then and there we are immediately lifted, by no palpable means, into the supernatural. The touch 'Their hats were of the birk' certifies us. Directly we hear that we know where we are. Why so, we cannot tell. And this clinches it:

'It neither grew in syke nor ditch,  
Nor yet in any sheugh;  
But at the gates of Paradise  
That birk grew fair eneugh.'

Literally it is all done with that. Who can explain it? Not I. But what adjectival heightening could enhance it? None.

You never know where a fact is going to find you out. It may be in the middle of a poem, as in 'Usher's Well,' or at the beginning, as in 'The Unquiet Grave'; and there again I don't know why I am moved by it, as I undoubtedly am. In that ballad a young man is lamenting at his girl's grave; and it begins:

'The wind doth blow to-day, my love,  
*And a few small drops of rain:*  
 I never had but one true love,  
 In cold grave she was lain.'

So far as I am concerned, though I can't for the life of me tell how or why, the first two lines turn that ballad for me into the thing of beauty and tenderness which I find it to be; two apparently irrelevant facts about the weather, unrelated to anything which is to follow them. I wish I knew; but all I have to suggest is based by analogy upon what I believe to be the truth, that certain chords of organ-music will cause glass windows to ring, and sometimes will shatter them. So I think it may not be too fanciful to suppose that certain facts related in their proper place in a harmony or sequence of facts may have an intimate bearing upon what we are pleased to call the heart-strings. That happens in life: a thing seen, an emotion voiced, may break us down. A spring of love may gush in the heart, when that sealed fountain is struck with the right rod. I can suggest no other reason.

If I were to choose two more ballads to bear witness to the uplifting power of bare fact, or to the heartrending power of it, I should choose for the first, 'Thomas Rymer,' where the *clou* to the poet's weird experience lies in the statement that—

'For forty days and forty nights  
 He wade thro' red blude to the knee;  
 And he saw neither sun nor moon,  
 But heard the roaring of the sea.'

portents which really make the poem; and for the second, the touching plea of Fair Annie when Lord Thomas not only proposed to play her false, but invited her to minister to his

coming bride. So much she will do for him, she says. Where-  
upon he—

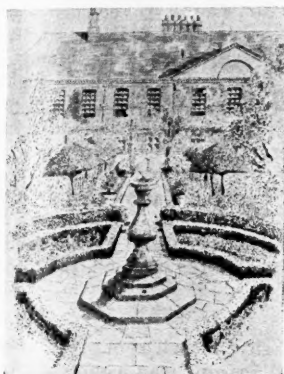
‘But she that welcomes my brisk bride  
Maun gang like maiden fair;  
She maun lace on her robe sae jimp  
And braid her yellow hair.’

But at the ‘jimp’ robe Annie breaks down. The simplicity of  
her answer pierces the heart.

So much, then, for the Little Sublime in literature, which may  
stir you by a lonely word, or by a concrete image. It is a simple  
truth that if in narrative poetry you wish to realise a spade, the  
best thing you can do is to call it one, and leave it at that. The  
revulsion against the ‘big Bow-wow’ which we are in the midst of  
just now will be worth the eccentricity, the frivolity, the ugliness,  
and brutality which disfigure much present-day poetry, if it lead us  
ultimately back to the right use of significant fact. We shall in  
time rediscover the illuminating and transfiguring power of mere  
statement.

## BOOK - NOTES

**R**ICHMOND in the present day is Mecca to many of those weary Londoners who cannot get far afield for recreation and country quiet.



THE DUTCH GARDEN,  
WARDROBE COURT

But its delights have only been open to the public within comparatively recent years. The now decayed Palace at Richmond, or Shene as it was originally called, was for four centuries the favourite holiday home of our kings and queens, and many threads of English history are woven into its story. In her *MEMORIES OF OLD RICHMOND* Lady Cave strikes the note of comedy and amusement with a refreshing humour; while the authority of her work is assured from very deep study.

**I**T is unfortunate that Dr. Bishop (of Yorkshire), who died recently, was not permitted to enjoy the success which awaited his book, *MY MOORLAND PATIENTS*, of which a second printing is now ready. The *Morning Post* described it as "the best treasury of country life and lore we have read for many a long day."

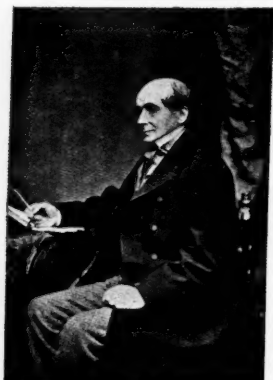
**T**WO indispensable books for those who wish to understand the Irish question are *ULSTER'S STAND FOR UNION*, by Mr. Ronald McNeill, M.P., and *IRELAND IN TRAVAIL*, by Miss Joice M. Nankivell and Mr. Sydney Loch. Of the former book the *Spectator* says: "Everybody who wants to get to the bottom of the Irish question should read it. . . . His account is the fullest and most coherent which has appeared."

**A**N out-of-doors book is always popular, and lovers of the open air will be glad to know that a cheaper edition of Mr. Ashley Leggatt's *STALKING REMINISCENCES* is now obtainable. The adventures after stags extend over a period of seven years, beginning in 1914. The author recalls experiences of very excellent quality.



## BOOK-NOTES

**T**HE official years spent by Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth at the Education Office were the most important and effective of his life-



SIR JAMES KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH

time, and it is to this period that Mr. Frank Smith gives prominence in his forthcoming *LIFE OF SIR JAMES KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH*. He has been able to quote from his subject's own words in many instances; for Sir James wrote an autobiographical manuscript near the end of his time, and this document conveys a very clear picture of his energy and passion for work. The Introduction is written by Sir Michael Sadler, K.C.S.I., and a chapter of *Reminiscences* is furnished by Lord Shuttleworth.

**M**UCH expert knowledge is concentrated in a little volume entitled *THE NEW PALESTINE*, which is in preparation under the editorship of Mr. Leon Simon and Mr. Leonard Stein. This complex study of Zionist conditions is of peculiar interest to English readers, and is inspired by sympathy with the ideal of a Jewish National rebirth in Palestine.

**L**ORD GORELL'S method in writing mystery stories is well known; he allows the reader every opportunity to arrive at the heart of the mystery before he eventually reveals it. "*D.E.Q.*," his new volume, is a tale of love and mystery; of a dark plot countered from an entirely unexpected quarter by subtle means; of faith rising triumphant above the black shadows that sweep across young and happy lives in a sunny summer on the Cornish coast.

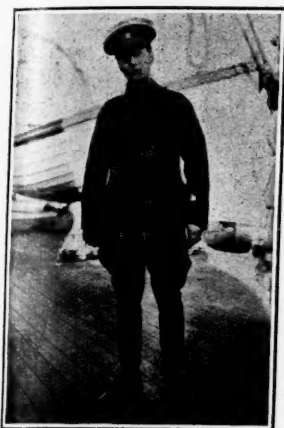
**R**EADERS of *THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE* are already familiar with Mr. Stanley Weyman's new story, *OVINGTON'S BANK*, and will welcome its early appearance in book form. The volume is slightly larger than the usual novel, and the coloured frontispiece completes a very attractive production. A *COMPLETE EDITION* of Mr. Weyman's novels is also being prepared in a handy size. The books are bound both in cloth and in leather and are printed on good, thin paper.

**A** "*WHO'S WHO*" of necessity, as well as of great interest to all in any way connected with Magdalen, is the *Third Issue* of the *COLLEGE RECORD*. It is edited by Lieut.-Colonel John Murray, and includes the names of all Magdalen men, past and present.

**D**R. R. W. MACKENNA has proved in his three collections of essays how well he understands the human heart. Those books were warmly acclaimed for their literary charm, an essential not lacking in his new novel, *FLOWER O' THE HEATHER*; a tale of the adventures, the fighting and escapes, of the Scottish Covenanters.

## BOOK-NOTES

MR. ANDREW SOUTAR can be relied upon for real romance, and he finds the setting for his new novel of mystery in a Sussex village.



MR. ANDREW SOUTAR

The critics agreed that Mr. Soutar's last book, *THE ROAD TO ROMANCE*, was the best he had written. Its readers, however, will probably discover that *HORNETS NEST* is even better.

IT is now seventeen years since the *WISDOM OF THE EAST SERIES*, which has done inestimable work by bringing true translations of Oriental philosophy to English readers, was begun. With the latest addition, *HINDU GODS AND HEROES*, the Series—small, handy, and attractive—reaches its fifty-second volume. The Editor's aim always has been, by a mutual understanding of the ideals which animate the inhabitants of the two hemispheres, to bridge the gulf between East and West.

"**L**OVE is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame," wrote Solomon in the old times, and this Margaret Deland has chosen as the theme of her powerful new novel, *THE VEHEMENT FLAME*.

**I**N the midst of modern life, with its haste and frantic effort to secure material advantages, one turns with relief to Mr. Monsarrat's new volume of studies in human sentiment. These poems are redolent with optimism and suggest the inevitable growth of contentment out of a simple regard of the realities of life and the living.

**A** MAN of many parts, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has enriched various branches of literature; and perhaps he is least well known as a poet. A *COLLECTED EDITION* of his verse is now at press. It includes a number of new poems and a short one-act play.

**T**O the lover of Nature the wild aspect of the rugged, boulder-strewn waste that lies between Land's End and St. Ives, in spite of its severities, is full of charm, though the glory of the promontory is the ocean wherein it is set. Mr. J. C. Tregarthen's *WILD LIFE AT THE LAND'S END* deals with the sport to be had in the locality; and there should be a great demand for the cheap edition of that work now to be issued, by those to whom Nature is a source of living and of lasting delight.

## BOOK-NOTES

**THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE** for September will contain among other articles the continuation of **OVINGTON'S BANK**, by Stanley J. Weyman.

**MANUEL GARCIA, THE TEACHER OF JENNY LIND**, by Angela Thirkell, offers delightful "notes and personal reminiscences" of the wonderful old musician who at ninety-seven, finding his prospective pupil too young for regular lessons, added, "But in a few years I reserve for myself the privilege." Readers of **THE CORNHILL** will recall the reminiscences of Dr. Jessopp—another friend of Mrs. Thirkell's grandfather, Burne-Jones, which appeared last November under the title of "Letters from a Shepherd of Arcady to a Little Girl."

**THE CATRAIL AND THE BLACK DYKE** are early British lines of defence in Northumberland and between the forks of the Tyne. Why do they face west, and who built them? Lieut.-Colonel G. R. B. Spain, C.M.G., employs history and archaeology to show that they were built against the Romans under Agricola advancing from Carlisle.

Mr. Arnold Whitridge follows up his "Barbey d'Aurevilly" with another study from French literature—the aristocratic satirist, Parnassian, Bohemian, **VILLIERS DE L'ISLE ADAM**.

**AFTER WILD SHEEP IN SARDINIA**, by H. Hesketh-Prichard, is a noteworthy sporting experience, full of local colour and impressions of the mountain folk, as well as the mountain hunting-grounds.

In addition, there are short stories by Orlo Williams, M.C., and John Haslette Vahey; **LOST LEADER**; an

episode of the Works, by J. G. Lockhart, illustrating the difficulty of dealing with a Labour organisation which will not suffer its representatives to see more than one side to a question; and a sequel to **THREE FOREIGNERS IN LONDON, 1584-1617**, by Malcolm Letts, giving the experiences at Queen Elizabeth's Court of an intelligent traveller, Lupold von Wedel.

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*These books are published by Mr. MURRAY, and may be obtained from any bookseller. Mr. Murray will be glad to send his QUARTERLY LIST OF NEW BOOKS to any reader of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE on request being made to him at 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1.*

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